

# **Exchange relations between Fijians and Euro-Americans (1774-1854), with reference to museum collections**

Stéphanie Leclerc-Caffarel

**Volume I: Text**

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**University of East Anglia**

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# Abstract

This thesis is an interpretative study of early museum collections from Fiji. It combines art-historical, historical and anthropological approaches to museum items, in order to investigate exchange relations between Fijians and Euro-Americans between 1774 and 1854.

It proposes two ways of considering early museum objects from Fiji. First, it suggests they can, and to some extent must, be primarily regarded as *exchanged objects* — i.e. as the results of reciprocal transactions and the agents of a shared history between Fiji, Europe and the U.S.A. Secondly, it argues that museum artefacts can be used as *major evidences* to study early exchange relations between Fijians and Euro-Americans, at least as important as contemporaneous literary and pictorial sources — most of them European or American.

Four chapters (2-5) explore and justify the above arguments. Based on historical case studies, the demonstration exemplifies the extent of reciprocity in Fiji-West early transactions, as well as the exchangeability of their objects. Especially, attention is called to the political agencies, material values and intellectual representations at stake between 1774 and 1854, projected onto objects from both sides of the exchanges. The first section sets the reflexion in its intellectual context, by explaining its methodologies and briefly reviewing the literature that helped in framing the research. The concluding chapter examines possible consequences for research and museum policies today, with regards to current Fijian concerns and interests.

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# Preface and Acknowledgments

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For as long as I can remember, I have been an observer, an art lover and a traveller. The PhD adventure that ends here allowed me to combine these interests, which has been both challenging and rewarding.

For personal and professional reasons my family travelled frequently when I was a child. My childhood memories are filled with the sights and sounds from many parts of the world, all of them having shaped what I have become in one way or another. Yet, there is one memory that is particularly dear to my heart; the time I spent in New Caledonia. When I was eleven we moved there; and when I turned thirteen we travelled back to France. That is when I decided that one day I would go back to the Pacific. It was the first place where I ever felt at home, and it fascinated me. I did return once in 1998, and twelve years later, I conducted my first “fieldwork” in Fiji. I like to believe it was the beginning of a long-lasting relationship.

This personal history and love for the Pacific are what have motivated me to write this PhD thesis, spurred on by further travel to the region and punctuated with beautiful encounters. I would therefore like to acknowledge those who I met during PhD trips who have guided and inspired me along the way. I would like to follow the path I travelled throughout the years and in the different places I visited, in order to name those who helped me, trusted me, taught me, gave me confidence and comfort during that time. If I have neglected to mention someone, the long list that follows should explain why. I owe you all so much. Many thanks to all of you who crossed my path and factually, spiritually, intellectually or emotionally helped me move forward.

My PhD story began in Paris, six years ago, with an encounter. The person I would like to thank first became my PhD supervisor, Professor Steven Hooper. During the last five years, Professor Hooper endeavoured to discreetly but efficiently guide me along the PhD process. More importantly, he gave me the confidence to undertake a PhD in the first place. That was in 2007, when I was an M.A. student at the Ecole du Louvre. The following year, he provided me with a real opportunity to begin a Doctorate and guided me in shaping what would become my ultimate research project. Significantly also, Sitiveni Hooper taught me how much a *kai valagi* could love Fiji. His enthusiasm was contagious. From him too I learnt my first Fijian words and many other things about objects, museums and exhibitions. For all of this, *vinaka vakalevu!*

In truth, I came to study Fiji randomly, almost out of pique. I remember telling my teacher at the Ecole du Louvre, Magali Mélandri, that I was not interested in Polynesia (!!!), when she and Philippe Peltier guided me toward Fiji as a topic for my first M.A. dissertation, in 2006. I wanted to work on Cenderawasih Bay, because of its Melanesian trends combined with Indonesian influences. Yet, the museum-based approach I wanted to develop on that area was hardly practical or even possible, given that I was in France, especially for an M.A. student. Thankfully, I soon discovered that Fiji had similar features as West Papua, as another kind of “in-between” place. Fiji’s pluri-cultural influences, including Melanesian ones, along with its impressive cultural specificities, had a thrilling potential for the young researcher I was. I never regretted the advice, nor the choice I made to follow it. I would therefore like to express my gratitude to Philippe Peltier and Magali Mélandri. They also hold a special place here because they taught me a great deal of what I know about the arts and cultures of the Pacific, and because they both trusted me then and now to conduct research and carry on stimulating projects. I do not forget Dr Ludovic Coupaye, to whom I am grateful for having first introduced me to Professor Hooper, and secondly for the invaluable advice he gave me, pointing in the direction of important anthropological readings that would help me in my studies. At the Musée du quai Branly, where I studied my first Fijian collection, I am also indebted to Angèle Martin, Stéphanie Dargaud and Sarah Frioux-Salgas for their help with the documentation of that collection, especially with the old registers from the Louvre and other museums (see Leclerc 2007).

In 2008, from Paris I moved to Norwich where the Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the University of East Anglia became my anchoring point. I am very grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a 3-year fees award, to UEA for a 3-year HUM scholarship to cover maintenance and to the SRU for assistance with fieldwork costs. I would also like to thank the SRU students and staff members who made that place feel like home. A special thought for those who started in the same time as me, were already there or preceded me; the students: Wilfried Leroy, Mary Katherine Scott, Laura De Becker, Fiona Sheales, Mathieu Viau-Courville, Aoife O’Brien, Nicole Peduzzi, Pippa Lacey, Wonu Veys and Andy Mills; and the staff: Pat Hewitt, Jeremy Bartholomew, Matthew Sillence, Lisa Shayes, Lynne Crossland and Julia Martin. I would also like to address those who passed through, especially Christopher Beekman and his wife Kathy, Elizabeth Cory-Pearce, and Bodil Olesen; and

those who came later: Marloline Mathurin, Julia Burtenshaw, Kiprop Lagat, Abubakar Sule, Meg Pinto, Marie Durand, Jo Lai, Laurie Martiarena, Imogen Simpson-Mowday... I am also indebted to the teachers of whom I attended the classes during my first PhD year, and who generously shared their knowledge with me. Thank you to Dr Karen Jacobs, Dr Aristoteles Barcelos-Neto, Dr George Lau. I am specially grateful to Dr Christian Kaufmann, who always showed an incredible kindness in the dissemination of his great knowledge. I am also thankful to my upgrade panel, Professor John Mack and Dr Anne Haour, for the excellent advice they gave me and for their encouraging comments on my work.

My first PhD research trip was to the U.S.A, from May to August 2009. I spent ten weeks as a graduate fellow at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., to whom I am extremely grateful for this scholarship. That time allowed me to study in detail the huge and important Wilkes collection (see chapter 4). This was a highly productive time for me, as well as thoroughly enjoyable. I am especially indebted to my fellowship tutors, Dr Adrienne Kaeppler and Dr Joshua Bell, who provided me with such a stimulating and friendly work environment. The always enthusiastic Dr Kaeppler shared with me some of her immense knowledge about Tonga and the Pacific, and about Wilkes' exploratory expedition and other historical voyages of exploration, including those of Cook (see chapter 2). She gave me the foundation for comparison and reflection and helped me enlarge my working perspective. Despite a very busy schedule, she always found time for answering my emails and questions. I am amazed with all she can do. I am also indebted to Dr Bell. During almost three months I shared his office, and he too managed to find time to guide me within the museum's premises as well as in the beginning of the PhD process. I received so much useful advice from him — thank you very much, Dr Bell.

Regarding the Wilkes collection, I am grateful to Dr Jane Walsh, who conducted a large research on the U.S. Exploring Expedition's ethnographic material in the 1980s. This research resulted in the creation of a website (<http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/usexex/learn/Overstreet-01.htm>) and in a lot of notes, drawings, photographs, etc. All this she shared with me generously.

At the NMNH, I would also like to thank the coordinator Candace Green, and the librarian Margaret R. Dittmore. And at the Museum Support Center, where I spent most of my time, I am extremely thankful to the collection manager Deborah Hull-Walski for

allowing me so much freedom in my work in the storage area, to conservator Greta Hansen for her help in the examination of the barkcloths and mats, and to the collection specialist Felicia Pickering who was my main interlocutor and a great help on a daily basis. I would also like to thank Carrie Beauchamp, who helped me with the database, Susan Crawford for lovely lunch breaks and David Rosenthal for his photographic advice. I must also thank Bethany Edmunds, fellow at the Museum of the American Indian, for the hint of the Pacific she brought everywhere with her.

During my time in the U.S.A, I also visited museums in New York, Salem and Cambridge (Massachusetts). The most significant of these visits was in Salem, for the Peabody Essex Museum holds a very large collection of early Fijian material, brought there by New England traders from the second decade of the 1800s onwards (see chapter 3).

In Salem, I would like to express my thanks to the curator for the Americas and Oceania, Karen Kramer Russell, and to the collections specialist, Christine Bertoni, who accompanied and guided me through the collection during one week. Despite a short time and a busy schedule, we managed to do a lot, checking many things in the earliest Fijian collection. I am also grateful to Christina Hellmich, previous curator at the PEM and now curator at the De Young Museum in San Francisco, for having directed me to K. Kramer Russell in the first place.

Having said this, it is important to emphasise that my work on the Salem collection remains a work in process. Initially, the one-week research visit was meant to be a preview. It aimed to help me and the museum professionals to organise a more in-depth research in the following year of my PhD. The first two days of the visit in 2009 were devoted to selecting, from catalogue cards, what I hoped to see in priority; and that excluded all barkcloths and textiles from the beginning for conservation and accessibility reasons. The next couple of days were spent looking at items that were on my list *and that were accessible*. With the cards, the strategy was to be as systematic as possible. I therefore photographed all of them, with the exception of things I was certain not be able to see in 2009. Due to a lack of time, I had to make choices. The same methodology applied to the archives. I only went to the Phillips library on my last day in Salem. The librarian gave me precious information about the kind of archives the library held and, as much as possible, about their content. Unfortunately, due to a variety of circumstances, I had no chance to go back to Salem during my PhD. Dr Kramer Russell

and Chris Bertoni helped me very nicely from a distance. They provided me with additional information when I needed. In addition, I accessed a number of archival documents from Salem, including trading journals, in Canberra (Australia) via the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. Yet, my work in Salem remained unfinished — a frustrating situation for the Salem collection and archives could have been a PhD project in itself.

At the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., I am thankful to Christina J. Hodge, who arranged a short but helpful research visit for me. This allowed me to see the Fijian artefacts of the Peabody Museum related to the Wilkes exhibition.

In New York, I went to the Metropolitan Museum and to the American Museum of Natural History. At the former place, I spent a whole day. There, I am highly appreciative of Dr Eric Kjellgren's efforts to accommodate me. In particular, thanks to him I was able to examine in detail the quasi-totality of the Metropolitan's Fijian collection, including the breastplates usually on display. At the second venue, I want to especially thank Sumru Aricanli, senior scientific assistant, for fitting me into a busy schedule and for giving me a very good overview of the Fijian collection during the afternoon I spent there.

From my trip to the U.S.A, I am also deeply grateful to Carol O'Shaughnessy, with whom I lived during three months and who became a dear friend of mine. Thanks to Carol, her family and friends, among whom I would like to specially distinguish Jeff Barnes, I felt at home. Thank you very much!

The climax of my PhD research happened in 2010, with a six-month trip to the Pacific. Most of that time was spent in Fiji, mainly in Suva. I also visited others places, for the purpose of researching museum collections and for scientific gatherings. I had a wonderful time in Fiji, productive in terms of research and exceptional in terms of personal relationships.

At the Fiji Museum, I would first like to express my gratitude to the director Sagale Buadromo, with whom it has been a pleasure to work — it still is. S. Buadromo always found time to help me with my enquiries, willingly partaking in stimulating projects. Hopefully, that cooperation will last a long time and continue to be a productive relationship.

I am particularly grateful to Ratu Sela Rayawa, the registrar and librarian, who shared with me so much of his encyclopaedic knowledge about the museum, its

collections and library, and about Fijian history. I spent many hours at the Fiji Museum's library, and I always felt lucky to have him around.

My deep thanks go to Sakiusa "Zack" Kataiwai, field research officer, and to Mereia Lesi, assistant librarian, for the many hours they spent with me in storage, where they manage to keep the atmosphere both productive and fun. Mereia especially has become a dear friend of mine. I hold her and her family (both on the Lesi and Luvunakoro sides) in high regard, and I am particularly proud of her daughter, Esther Tubuka Caffarel Lesi.

In these acknowledgements, I cannot forget the late Tubuka Raikaci, previous conservator and gardener at the Fiji Museum, who taught me a lot of Fijian vocabulary and told me a few jokes I am still not sure I understood...

Regarding the development of my *vosa vakaviti*, I would also like to thank Sepeti "Mata" Matararaba, who was the first to believe that I had the capacity to speak proper Fijian. He therefore addressed me mainly in Fijian and encouraged the others to do so as well. *Vinaka vakalevu Mata!*

I am also grateful to Ratu Jone Naucabalavu, head of the pre-history archaeology department, to Prakashni Sharma, responsible for the marketing, Shanil, accounts officer, Jonal Singh, responsible for the gift shop, William Copeland, in charge of the photographs, Roxy Mandam, now retired as a shop assistant and Anna, another shop assistant. I do not forget Elia Nakoro, head of the historical archaeology department, the late Joana, driver, or Vika Koro Musumoto, in charge of the exhibitions. All of them took very good care of me during these few months, always worried that I was properly fed, accommodated, that I would find my way home safely... They made me feel part of the team. For that: a big thank you!

At the National Archives of Fiji, I would like to thank Lasena, whose family name I do not know, for her help with the missionary archives. I am also indebted to the person who authorised me to access the Methodist archives in Suva, at the Central Methodist Church of Suva. I am sorry not to remember her name, but I remember very well that I was warmly welcomed and amiably helped. *Vinaka!*

From the Anglican Church, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Reverend Father Fereimi Cama, dean and vicar of the Anglican Cathedral of Suva. In particular, I would like to thank him for his time and help in clarifying many things about the Anglican history of Fiji and the differences between Anglican and Catholic

doctrines. I am also grateful to him for letting me attend the ordination of the new Anglican Bishop, in August 2010, and for giving me full access to the Anglican archives kept in Suva.

From the Catholic Church, I am thankful to Lusi Kuriuci and Kalara Moce, from the tribunal office, to Sister Wati Koroiciri and to the Reverend Father Beniamino Kaloudau, vicar general of the Archdiocese of Suva, for letting me access the archives at the Nicolas House. To them, as well as to Lela, Laure, etc., I would like to address my deep thanks for I enjoyed my time among them very much and eventually felt at home at the Nicolas House.

Many others helped me in Fiji. Among them, I would like to distinguish Laijipa Naulivou, from the Lau School, and Dr Paul Geraghty (Paula Qereti) from the School of Language, Arts and Media at the University of the South Pacific. I was also well looked after by Ivan and Ateca Williams and by Dick Watling and his wife Kelera, of whom I have very good memories.

A big special thank to my lovely Fijian teacher, Savaira Tuberi, who taught me the language very efficiently and intensively, one hour a day, five days a week during approximately five months. She always made herself available and made the Fijian language accessible to me. *Isa, au via vulia na vosa vakaviti tale kei kana pinati mai na waitui, i mata ni vale ni yaya maroroi...*

My last Fijian thanks go, most sincerely, to Suzie Yee Shaw, her father Emosi, and their family, for providing me with way more than a place to stay in Suva. They have been my family over there, and such a nice one! I want to acknowledge Vicky too, who passed away shortly after my departure, and her family. Thank you for giving me an insight into the both the Rotuman and Fijian culture and for always being so kind to me.

At the Auckland Museum (AM), where I went for a week in June 2010, I want to thank Fuli Pereira and Vasiti Palavi. They arranged a very intense and yet pleasant research visit for me.

In August, I went to Australia, for the main purposes of studying library collections. In Sydney, I am grateful to the staff of the Mitchell Library, who helped me optimise my time, so that I could access a large quantity of missionary journals and other archives in less than two weeks. I am also deeply indebted to Fergus Clunie, who went to the Mitchell Library for the sole purpose of meeting me on a week day, and who sat with me for hours on a bench, answering my numerous questions about Fijian early

material culture and the museum collections I had seen. I am also thankful to Dr Cynthia Hunter, for being such a nice hostess during those two weeks.

In Canberra, I must first thank Kylie Moloney, for her immense help with the microforms of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, which I accessed at the National Library of Australia. These notably included missionary archives from Fiji and traders journals from Salem. I would also like to express my gratitude to Crispin Howarth, from the National Gallery of Australia, for showing me their small but interesting Fijian collection. I am also grateful to Christine and Johan Smit, for their generous hospitality and for their help with directions, buses, etc.

In August, I also went to Rarotonga, Cook Islands, for the Pacific Arts Association International Symposium. I am especially thankful to all of those who gave me feedback on my paper about the virtual circulation of early museum collections from Fiji (see chapter 6).

In September, the final step of my voyage to the Pacific was New Caledonia, where I attended the fourth Festival of Melanesian Arts. I am especially grateful to the Fijian delegation, led by Meretui Ratunabuabua from the Fijian Department of Culture, who allowed me to listen in on many occasions. Among them, I would particularly like to thank the artists and craftswomen of the delegation for the explanation on their work.

At the invitation of Tarisi Vunidilo, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA), I also had the chance to attend the general assembly held in Koné, New Caledonia. In that context, I had the occasion to present again the idea of a virtual circulation of early artefacts from Fiji, in front of museum specialists from the Pacific. This was a great opportunity for me and I would like to particularly thank Tarisi for it, as well as for her continuous encouragement on a number of matters.

I am also grateful to Françoise Cayrol and her family, and to Patrice Godin and Christophe Sand for helping me around. I would like to thank the team of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, and Pételo Tuilalo from the Tjibaou Cultural Centre, for their help and warm welcome. Deep thanks go to my friend Séverine and to her family and friends, who significantly augmented the friendly dimension of my two last weeks in the Pacific. I am also indebted to Allison Lotti, Béatrice Fine, and to their family and friends from Wallis, for their incredible hospitality and for the fascinating discussions we had about Pacific cultures.



Before and after the Pacific, I visited a number of places in England and France. The Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology holds a large number of Fijian artefacts from the 1870s and early colonial times, as well as a few items connected with early missionaries (see chapter 5). There, I would like to thank the director, Professor Nicholas Thomas, as well as Dr Lucie Carreau, Rachel Hand, Dr Anita Herle, Dr Mark Elliott and Carl Hogsden, for efficiently contributing to some very interesting and friendly research visits (March 2010), and to remarkable lectures, exhibition openings, etc., all of which were highly stimulating.

At the British Museum, which has Fijian collections from almost all periods under consideration in this thesis, I am very grateful to Jill Hasell for her time and insight into the collection, from May to September 2011. At the Royal Botanical Gardens of Kew, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Mark Nesbitt, who arranged for me a two-day research visit in July 2011, despite a busy schedule. This allowed me to examine the important Seemann and Milne material kept at Kew Gardens. In Maidstone, I would like to sincerely thank the collection manager of the Maidstone Museum and Bentsley Art Gallery, Giles Guthrie, for his great help in the examination of the *totality* of the Brenchley collection from Fiji, in September 2011. I would also like to thank the registrar, Clare Caless and the rest of the team, who made me feel very comfortable and welcomed. I cannot forget the lovely homemade scones I ate on the train on my way back home... At those three places I received significant help from Katrina Talei Iglesden, whom I would like to specially thank here.

At the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford), I would like to express my appreciation to the curator, Jeremy Coote, and to the collections specialist, Elin Bornemann. They gave me the opportunity of seeing a large number of artefacts in the short time available in February 2010. The Pitt Rivers' collection notably includes pieces from Cook's second voyage (see chapter 2).

In France, a number of research visits date back from my M.A. time. Yet, the collections I studied then were also material for this thesis. I must therefore thank those who have helped me since 2006 and until very recently, in a number of museums:

At the Museum of Natural History of Toulouse, I went several times between 2007 and 2009, spending months in total working on the Fijian collection, and particularly on the items gathered by Gaston de Rocquemaurel, second-in-command on Dumont d'Urville's *Astrolabe* (1837-40). I am thankful to all members of the Collection

Department, who took turns to help me in storage, for weeks. Even in the busiest moments of the museum's opening, everybody managed to teach me something about the collections, the museum or the new display. It was my first internship in a museum, and I learnt a lot. I am especially indebted to Sylviane Pochstein, in charge of the ethnographic collections. Not only did she help me with the Fijian pieces at the Museum of Natural History, she also introduced me to a number of persons and places in Toulouse, making my research of archival documents a lot easier. Since 2010, I have always received the same kind of help when I needed it. *Merci beaucoup!*

In Toulouse, I would also like to thank Caroline Berne from the Musée des Augustins, Josette Castillon and Evelyne Ugaglia from the Musée Saint-Raymond, and the staff of the city archives, for their great help with Rocquemaurel's documents and with the archives related to the museum history of the city. I am also thankful to Dr Jean-Philippe Zanco, who works on Rocquemaurel from the Navy angle. It has been a pleasure to collaborate and exchange with him — still is.

At Boulogne-sur-Mer, the *Château-Musée* holds a few items connected with Dumont d'Urville. I am grateful to Anne-Claire Laronde, the curator, and to Céline Ramio, in charge of the collections, for letting me access these items. I would also like to thank Marie Durand, who was an intern there at the time of my visit (2007). She guided me through the storage very efficiently.

At the Museum of Natural History of La Rochelle, I would like to thank Elise Patole-Edoumba, in charge of the huge ethnographic collection in April 2008. Her explanations and the documents she provided me on Dumont d'Urville's items kept there shed a crucial light on the history of the whole Dumont d'Urville collection.

In Dunkerque, the Musée des Beaux-Arts holds a small but rare collection connected with d'Entrecasteaux's voyage (see chapter 2). It was very important for me to access it. My genuine thanks go to Claude Steen-Guelen, in charge of the ethnographic collection, for her time and availability, as well as for being always very spontaneous and nice. To her, I would like to associate Dr Hélène Guiot, in charge of the inventory of the Pacific collections in Dunkerque, the staff and the volunteers of the museum, who rendered my two visits very pleasant, in May and July 2011.

In Rouen, the Museum of Natural History keeps a small Fijian collection, which I had the opportunity to examine in detail. For this I have to thank Julia Ferloni, trainee

curator there in December 2010. She first mentioned this collection to me and then arranged a research visit in Rouen for me.

In Lyon, I would like to express my gratitude to Claire Brizon, in charge of the ethnographic collection at the Musée des Confluences. Although I did not have the chance to go to Lyon yet, we managed to do quite a lot via email. I hope that this fruitful correspondence will continue.

I would also like to thank Dr Hélène Goiran for her insight into some of current and historical military aspects of Fijian culture. I am indebted to Dr Yannick Essertel for sharing much information with me on the Catholic missionaries of Fiji. I would like to express my thanks to Christopher Bartlett and Dr Deborah Pope for their help with my English, along with repeated encouragements.

My deep gratitude goes to Dr Simonne Pauwels who, by chance, was in Fiji at the same time as me in 2010. Simonne taught me a great deal about being an anthropologist and a researcher. She explained me many things about modern Fiji. For years now, she has been a continuous support, a great proof-reader and a very dear friend, full of good advice and pertinent comments. I cannot thank her enough!

I would like to specially thank Nicholas Thomas and Karen Jacobs, my viva examiners, for the very helpful advice they gave me. Especially, Karen Jacobs has been a great interlocutor over the last weeks of the PhD process, always answering emails promptly, and providing me with a lot of constructive remarks.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the whole team of the Fijian Art Research Project (<http://www.fijianart.sru.uea.ac.uk/index.php>) in general. I already mentioned each and every member individually; yet, I would now like to thank the team as a whole for its continuous support, great work and for keeping me in the loop, in spite of many changes of plan due to personal circumstances. I hope that the Project will continue to be successful, they deserve it!

Now, on the side of the adventure, familiar passengers kept walking into my life. I am indebted to them too. In particular, I would like to thank my parents. All along the years they gave me roots and wings. They, along with my brother and sisters, have been my first travelling partners, and shaped my travelling tastes. Importantly, I am also grateful to my extended family, both in Martinique and France, and to my relatives-in-law. My parents-in-law and my husband's aunt, even though they came later in my life, are equally family to me now. A big special thank go to my elder sister, Caroline. Not

only is she one of my dearest friends, greatest supporters and confidants, but she was also one of my earliest proof-readers. *Merci ma soeur.*

Now, special thanks have to go to my friends whom I have not mentioned yet. In order of appearance in my life, I would like to thank: Séverine, Chloé, Lucie, Armelle, Vincent, Hugues, Martine, Frédéric, Laurent, Rachel, Aurélie, Fleur, Cécile, Agathe and Ginny, for years of support, fun and stimulating brainstorming.

My final and deepest thanks go to the most important of all my travel companions, my husband Florent, with a special thought for a new passenger in our lives, our wonderful daughter Judith. I love them with all my heart. Especially, I wish to dedicate this thesis to Florent. I could conventionally thank him for his continuous support, patience and understanding, which he deserves very much. But more importantly, I would like to thank him for making our lives so much fun. I know that living with “crazy busy Stef” those last eight years was not always easy, and that living without me during fieldwork and other research trips was not any easier. Yet, Florent kept taking things with much philosophy and humour. There is nothing I could write that would truly describe what he — and his heroic IT skills — have meant to me. *The cat ;-).*

## Notes on orthography and language

The orthography for Standard Fijian, which has its origins in nineteenth century missionary linguistic work, is as follows.

B is pronounced “mb” like in **amber**

C is pronounced “th” like in **gather**

D is pronounced “nd” like in **pound**

G is a nasal sound, where the “g” is close to “ng” in **singer**

J has a tendency, from Lauan influence, to be pronounced “ch” like in **search**

Q is pronounced “ng” like in **bingo**

R is usually rolled

Further precise information has been provided by Churchward (1973:9-11), Milner (1956:4-9) and Geraghty (2008:12-16).

For consistency reasons, this thesis respects the modern way of writing Fijian. The plural does not usually involve a change in the spelling of Fijian nouns, so that convention has been preserved. If not clearly indicated by the context, the plural may be marked by the additions of prefixes, such as *vei-*, pronouns or cardinal numbers (Milner 1956: 16-17; Geraghty 2008:20, 23). Otherwise, the context allows quantities to be suggested (Geraghty 2008:137). Also, Fijian being an agglomerating language, like German, what could be seen as several words will often be gathered into the same grammatical unit. Different grammatical functions will then be emphasized by clear distinctions (e.g. articles, nouns, adjectives). Thus, Vitilevu should preferably be written in one word, although the two-word orthography is now usual as well (Viti Levu). *Levu* is indeed part of the island’s name rather than an autonomous adjective here. The same applies to Vanualevu/Vanua Levu, etc.

# Abbreviations

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AM	Auckland Museum, Auckland (New Zealand)
ANF	Archives National de France, Paris (France)
BM	British Museum, London (U.K.)
CUMAA	Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (U.K.)
EI	Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts (U.S.A.)
FM	Fiji Museum, Suva (Fiji)
KG	Kew Gardens, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (U.K.)
LMS	London Missionary Society
MAN	Musée des Antiquités Nationales, now Musée d'Archéologie National, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France)
MdC	Musée des Confluences, Lyon (France)
Met.	Metropolitan Museum, New-York (U.S.A.)
Mf.	Microform
MHNT	Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Toulouse, Toulouse (France)
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney (Australia)
Ms.	Manuscript
MMBAG	Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery, Maidstone (U.K.)
MQB	Musée du Quai Branly, Paris (France)
NH	Nicolas House, Suva (Fiji)
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra (Australia)
NMNH	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.)
PAA	Pacific Arts Association
PMB	Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
PEM	Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts (U.S.A.)
PIMA	Pacific Islands Museum Association
RCAF	Roman Catholic Archives of Fiji
SHM	Service Historique de la Marine, Vincennes (France)
SM	Société de Marie (Marist Society)
SI	Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.)
SIA	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.)
SRU	Sainsbury Research Unit, Norwich (U.K.)
Ts.	Typescript
UEA	University of East Anglia, Norwich (U.K.)

# Chapter 1

## Museum objects, exchanged objects

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### The scope of the study

This thesis is an interpretative study of early museum collections from Fiji. It combines art-historical, historical and anthropological approaches to museum items, in order to investigate exchange relations between Fijians and Euro-Americans from 1774 to 1854.

### Time frame and geographical scope

The first recorded contact between Fijians and Europeans in Fiji happened in 1774, when Cook and his crew briefly interacted with inhabitants of Vatoa<sup>1</sup> (chapter 2). There might have been earlier contacts, but these were not recorded in European written history. The European “discovery” of the Fijian islands has been attributed to Tasman in 1643, yet, as will be explained in chapter 2, one could hardly talk of interaction during Tasman’s first sighting of “Fiji.”

Contact between Fijians and Euro-Americans gradually intensified until the mid-1850s, when according to Routledge it took on a new dimension (1985:5-6). One seminal event of that period was Cakobau’s conversion to Christianity, on the 30th April 1854 (Waterhouse 1997 [1866]:178-179; Calvert 2003 [1858]:335). Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau was Vunivalu of Bau and one of the most powerful chiefs in the “Fijian” islands. Many conversions followed his (Sahlins 1985:37-41; Calvert 2003:336), influencing pre-existing relationships between “Fijians”, missionaries and other foreigners, including “Tongans”, the British and other Western settlers and visitors, mainly from Europe and North America.<sup>2</sup>

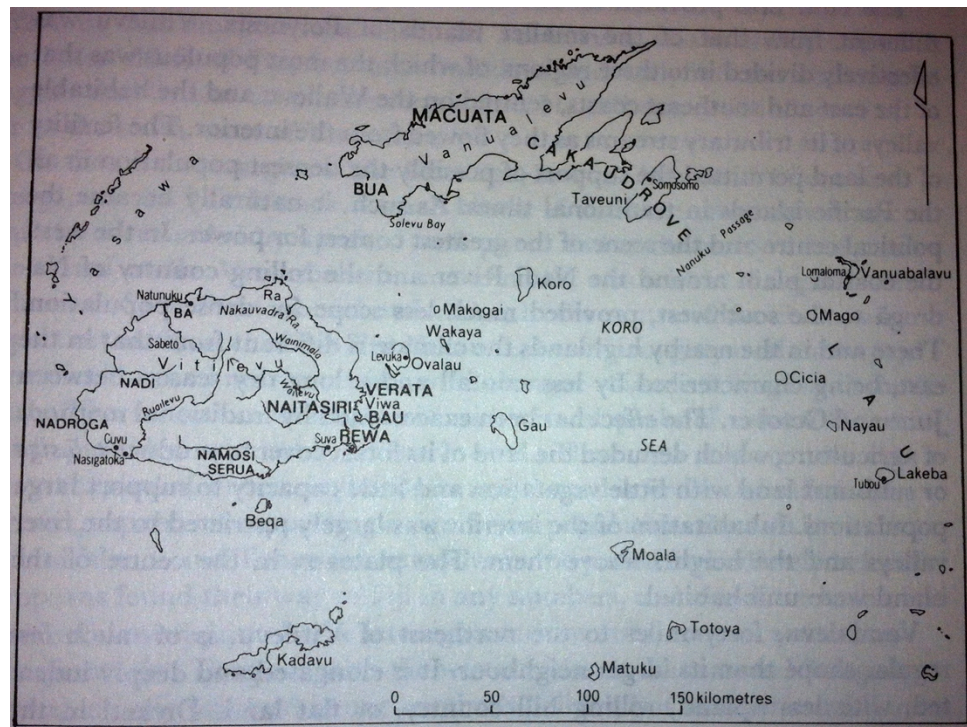
Several historians (Derrick 1957:111; Routledge 1985:84; Ravuvu 1997:viii-ix; Calvert 2003:181ff.) described Cakobau’s conversion as a political manoeuvre to reinforce his position on the regional and international scene. The same authors suggested that Cakobau had little choice, being urged on several sides to embrace Christianity while in need of increased support. Whatever his reasons, the strategy

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<sup>1</sup> Vatoa is a small island in the extreme south-east of the Fijian archipelago as currently delimited.

<sup>2</sup> “Fiji” and “Fijian”, like “Tonga” and Tongan”, are problematic geo-political constructions that vary according to the period in question. The use of these terms will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

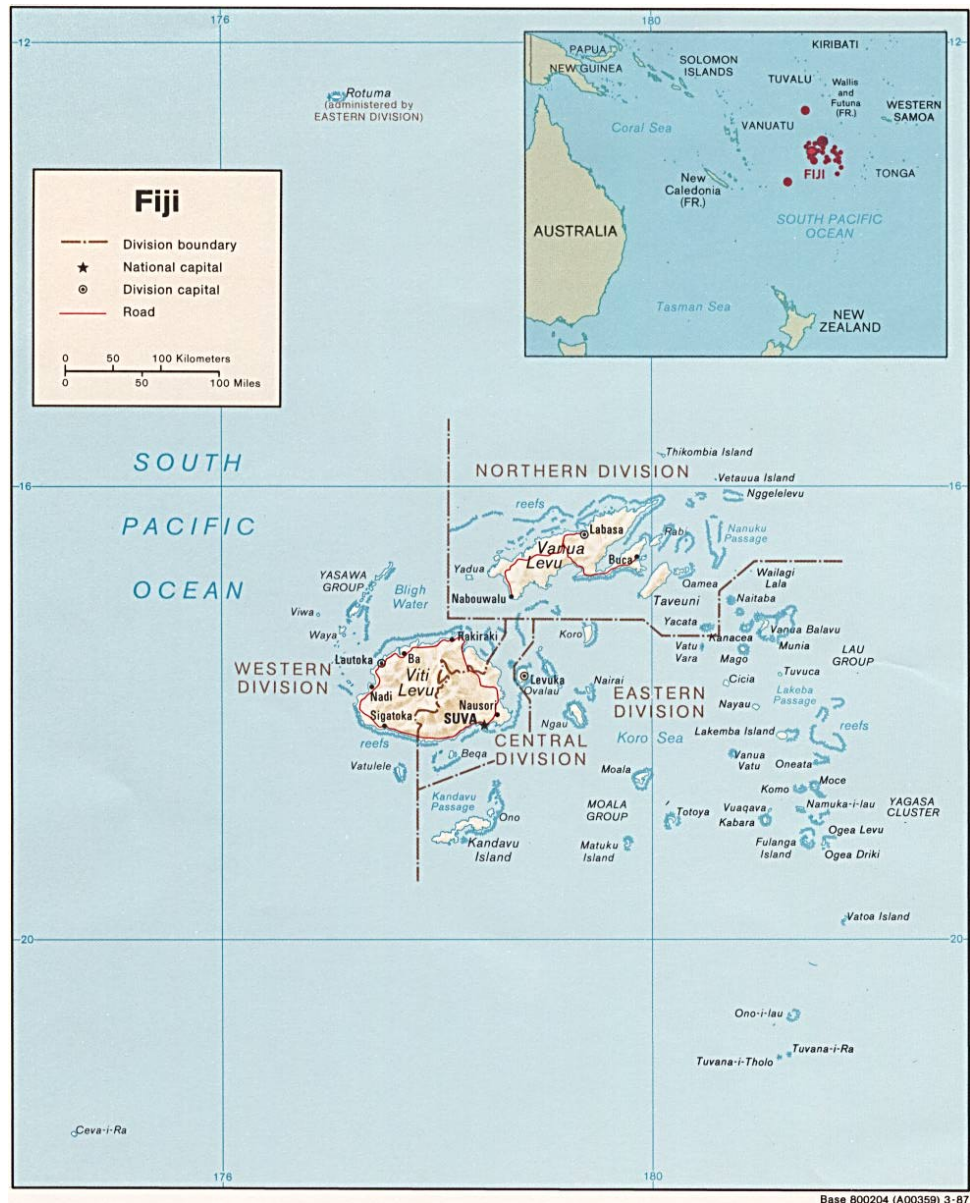
worked well if judged by Cakobau's decisive role in later events in Fiji's history, including cession to Great Britain on 10th October 1874. What is now called "Fiji" remained a British colony for almost one hundred years until 10th October 1970, when the country gained independence.



1.1— "Fiji in the early nineteenth century" (Routledge 1985:15)

Thus presented, Cakobau's engagement with Christianity seems to have impacted on the colonial future of all Fijian islands. Yet, in spite of its decisive role, Bau was only one amongst several powerful chiefdoms; and what we generically designate as "Fiji" today was a mosaic of connected political units rather than a homogenous entity (fig.1.1). East-west differences were strong, as well as inner dissensions within chiefdoms.





1.2— Regional map of Fiji

Such a complex political situation partly stemmed from the geographical and cultural position of the Fijian islands, in a transitional zone between what one could now call “Polynesia” and “Melanesia” (see Routledge 1985:3-39).<sup>3</sup> The archipelago under

<sup>3</sup> The division of the South Pacific into Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Australia was first formulated by Dumont d’Urville, in 1832, from a combination of racial, geographical and, marginally, cultural criteria. It is largely anachronistic here. Yet, although its relevance is questionable, it has become acknowledged as a convenient geographical tool over the centuries (Tryon & de Deckker 1998:23); and it is now part of the geo-political reality and “the cultural consciousness of the peoples of Oceania” (Hau’ofa 1993:16). To a certain extent, it reflects Oceania’s cultural diversity, although it fails to express its complexity. Whether Fiji belongs to Polynesia or Melanesia has been a long-standing argument in Pacific studies. Historically, the archipelago was considered Melanesian. Nowadays, scholars often include it in Western Polynesia, because of obvious and well-studied connections between Fiji and its eastern neighbours (e.g. Kaeppler 1978b). Yet, both positions may seem awkward, for they oversimplify the historical influences that

consideration includes about 300 islands and a number of smaller islets.<sup>4</sup> They lie in close proximity to Tonga, which in part explains why areas now considered “Fijian” were once equally influenced by “Fijian” and “Tongan” chiefdoms. It was the case, for instance, of the Lau group in the east and of the region of Moala in the south-east (Sahlins 1962:14–18). Furthermore, the influence of American and European travellers gradually increased in the isles during the period under discussion.

This variety of influences has been little studied with respect to their material outcomes, among which can be counted museum collections. The range of foreign agencies already at play in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was considerable, catalysed by an increasing number of foreign ships and goods in the area. In parallel, the power of local political forces fluctuated in Fijian districts such as Bua, Rewa, Bau, Viwa, Cakaudrove and Lau, where Fiji-West contacts were the most intense. This thesis mainly focuses on these areas, and on the material exchanges that sustained their transformations.

## Methodological approach and sources

### Methodology

When I began researching this topic in 2006 my initial question was: “why are most early collections from Fiji kept outside Fiji?” Now, a concise answer would be: “Because they were exchanged.” This dissertation investigates that statement.

What we now call “ethnographic collections” have often been regarded as mere products of European intentions, to preserve and illustrate some Western experience of faraway cultures onto which a variety of discourses have been formulated (see Grognet 2005:50; Clifford 1988:215ff.). Such discourses, along with classification and display endeavours in museums, tend to obscure the process of collection making (Clifford 1988:220). Over the last decades, however, attention has been given to collecting practices. Such studies, first focussed on “collectors” and now frequently centred on “collections,” helped to methodologically “revisit,” “unpack” and “reassemble” museum ensembles; and this historically, archaeologically and anthropologically (see Ter Keurs 2007; Byrne *et al.* 2011; Jacobs 2011; Harrisson *et al.* 2013). Especially, a number of

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contributed to the complex and distinctive cultural identity of Fijian societies, as well as underestimating their diversity. It is not the role of this thesis to enter into such debates. Here, the terms Polynesia and Melanesia will be used mainly as geographical designations.

<sup>4</sup> Data source: official website of the Fijian government, [www.fiji.gov.fj](http://www.fiji.gov.fj), last consulted 12th March 2012.

authors now plead for a recognition of the role of non-Western actors in the production of museum collections (e.g. Clifford 1988; Schindlbeck 1993; Küchler 1997; O'Hanlon & Welsh 2000; Gosden & Knowles 2001; Byrne *et al.* 2011; Jacobs 2011; Harrisson *et al.* 2013). This thesis continues that trend. It is acknowledged that early museum collections from Fiji offer crucial insights into the cultural history of the archipelago. Yet, it seems that an essential characteristic of these artefacts has been largely overlooked, their nature as *objects of exchange*. It is from this renewed perspective, and building on Thomas' book *Entangled objects* (1991), that early artefacts from Fiji will now be examined.

Over the last six years, I surveyed early Fijian collections from museums in Europe, the U.S.A and the Pacific (see preface). In total, these investigations embraced approximately 3500 objects, kept in French- and English-speaking countries.<sup>5</sup> Among the first results of this museum-based research, detailed in the next chapters, it appeared that most collections stemmed from mainly symmetrical exchange relations between Fijians, Europeans and North Americans — hereafter “Europeans” may include people from North America. Accordingly, this thesis proposes two ways of considering early museum objects from Fiji. First, it suggests that they can, and to some extent must, be primarily regarded as *exchanged objects* — i.e. as the results of reciprocal transactions and the agents of a shared history between Fiji, Europe and the U.S.A. Secondly, it argues that museum artefacts can be used as *major evidences* to study early exchange relations between Fijians and Euro-Americans, at least as important as contemporaneous literary and pictorial sources — most of them European or American.

Four chapters (2-5) will explore and justify the above arguments. Based on historical case studies, the extent of reciprocity in Fiji-West early transactions will be demonstrated, as well as the exchangeability of their objects. Attention will be called to the political agencies, material values and intellectual representations at stake between 1774 and 1854, projected onto objects from both sides of the exchanges. The concluding chapter will examine possible consequences for research and museum policies today, with regards to current Fijian concerns and interests. The present section aims to set the reflection in its intellectual context by explaining its methodologies and briefly reviewing the literature that helped in framing the research.

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<sup>5</sup> The latter restriction aimed to insure the intelligibility and appropriate exploitation of collection-related documents, including archives.

## Primary sources and secondary references

As the preceding remarks suggested, museum collections will be our main tool for analysis. However, they will be regularly complemented by historical written data and pictorial sources, especially where material objects are lacking. This said, this thesis will not simply criticise and diminish traditional historical sources (written and pictorial documents). Thomas warned us against such a tendency in recent postcolonial writing, which unwillingly “exaggerates and reinscribes precisely those western hegemonies that they wishfully challenge” (1999:2). He explained:

“Euro-American critics have diminished their own traditions and histories, reducing arguably interesting writers and artistes, from Herodotus to Gauguin and beyond, to retailers of exoticist and racist stereotypes, without in any obvious way thereby empowering or even acknowledging the autonomous complexity of non-European cultures.” (Thomas 1999:2)

This is a pitfall this thesis hopes to avoid. Rather, it intends to explore the potential of museum items as primary documents, in the investigation of Fiji-West early relations. Given this, all resources present opportunities and difficulties. They require some methodological precaution.

## Museum collections

Recently, the approach of museum collections this thesis seeks to follow has been described as *archaeological*, i.e. object-centred (Byrne *et al.* 2011: 11-12, 32-33; Harrison 2013:18-22). Following on from this idea, objects will be the core of our historical analysis (chapters 2-5). They will also allow us to question the continuity of their agencies, in chapter 6.

The following chapters will refer to museum items in two different ways. A limited number of remarkable artefacts will be specifically discussed. These are well documented — i.e. clearly associated with historical persons and events — or outstanding in their material features — e.g. components, shape, design. They allow a precise analysis of their exchangeability at one or several moments of their history. In some cases, an examination of material and symbolic values will be possible too. In contrast, the great mass of the examined collections will be studied at a more statistical level, especially in chapters 3 & 4. Each weapon and ornament will not be described *per se*. Yet, their proportion in the collections will be regarded as a significant piece of information about their exchangeability (Schindlbeck 1993:62), itself representative of

the nature of the exchange relations in which they were involved and of the agencies of the protagonists at play (see below for a discussion on alienability and inalienability).

The reliability of museum collections as primary sources can be discussed. Often in museums acquisition data are unclear. In many cases, parts of the collections have been mixed up, scattered or lost over time. That is why this study chiefly focuses on well-documented items. An advantage of this is that well-identified artefacts sometimes allow non- or partially-documented collections to be analysed, through comparisons.

Besides documentation and consistency issues, museum collections also raise the question of their representativeness. Even well-preserved and well-documented ensembles must be considered non-exhaustive samples of a broader material culture. What reached museums and what did not depended on multiple factors. These included Western acquisition methods and criteria, practical constraints such as storage conditions on board ships, as well as local intentions to exchange or withhold objects (Schindlbeck 1993:59, 61-64) — both options being considered as “positive actions” (Byrne *et al.* 2011:8) of particular interest for this thesis’ argument.<sup>6</sup>

Even among the surviving items which became museum objects, few can be regarded as intact or strictly conform to what they originally were (Jeudy-Ballini 2004:109). However, the issue of their representativeness can be solved via comparisons — at least in part. Other collections and sources may inform missing and altered objects.



1.3 — NMNH, E2910



1.4 — NMNH, E2914

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<sup>6</sup> This given, this thesis does not want to undermine factors such as “luck” and “coincidence,” key in collecting practices (Schindlbeck 1993:62), nor underestimate the role of the “unintended” on the shape of “museum assemblages” and on the representation of indigenous people in museums (Harrison 2013:17).

Kaepler exemplified that complementarity of sources while discussing a few items from the Wilkes' collection, now at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Smithsonian Institution (SI), in Washington D.C. (1989:90-93). Among the Fijian items she examined there were two masks (*matavulo*) (E2910, E2914), one headdress (ET316) and one breastplate (*civavonovono*). The last was not acquired by the U.S. Exploring Expedition.<sup>7</sup> It later joined the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (CUMAA) in the United Kingdom.

Both *matavulo* are now missing their leaf-costume; and only traces of their polychromatic facial décor survive. The headdress, once considerably damaged and therefore unidentifiable, was matched with an illustration in Wilkes' account (1845, III:170) and conserved in the 1980s. The breastplate was identified by Clunie (1983b). In his analysis, Clunie referred to museum data as well as to an engraving in Wilkes' volumes (Wilkes 1845, III:58).



1.5— NMNH, ET316

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<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Exploring Expedition spent more than three months surveying the Fiji islands in 1840, under the command of Charles Wilkes. Much of the resulting collection is still kept in Washington, even though it has been partly scattered since the late nineteenth century, in the United States and abroad (Kaepler 1989:90; Walsh 2004). See chapter 4.



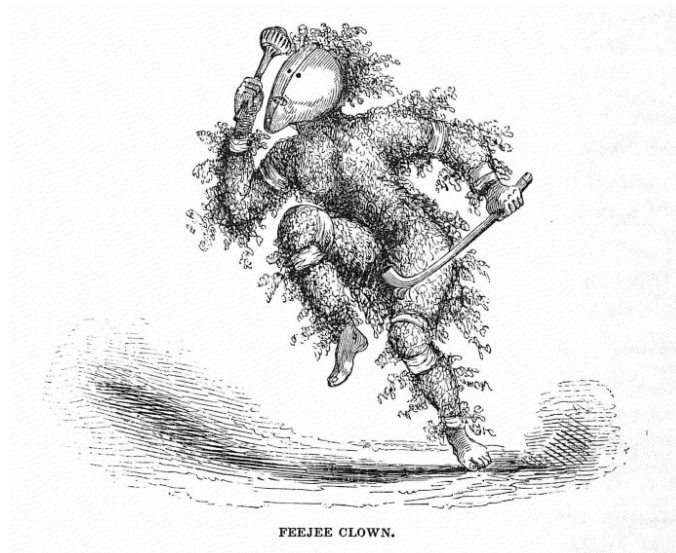


1.6— “Head-dress of Chiefs” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:170)

All these items were documented in Wilkes’ publication (1845). For instance, the club dance (*mekewau*), in which at least one *matavulo* appeared, was depicted along with the mask itself (Wilkes 1845, III:197-200). Precise hypotheses can therefore be formulated about the circumstances of their acquisition. The masks were probably obtained at Levuka (Ovalau, Central Fiji) on the 24th May 1840, or shortly after the performance ordered by the local chief (Tui Levuka). The original catalogue of the so-called “Wilkes collection” mentions the *matavulo* too (Peale 1846: n°1813-14).<sup>8</sup> Clunie and Ligairi compared these unique historical specimens with posterior practices in Fiji. They thus refined the hypotheses about what they were, i.e. “spirit masks” rather than “clowns masks” as the members of the U.S. Exploring Expedition described them (Clunie & Ligairi 1983a:70).

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<sup>8</sup> This catalogue is usually called “Peale catalogue” after its author, Titian Peale, the ornithologist on the U.S. Exploring Expedition.



1.7— “Feejee Clown” by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:198)

A brief textual description also completes the illustration of the headdress in Wilkes’ narrative. It indicates that the “old King” of Somosomo, Yavala (Tui Cakau),<sup>9</sup> offered it to Charles Wilkes, the leader of the U.S. Exploring Expedition (Wilkes 1845, III:160). The item is also mentioned in the Peale catalogue (n°2483) and can be compared with other feathered headdresses from the area (chapter 4).

The *civavonovono* breastplate has been closely associated with Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu of Bau (1829-52) and father of Cakobau. Although it remained inaccessible to the members of the U.S. Exploring Expedition in 1840, it was depicted as one of Tanoa’s most precious belongings and as a prestigious marker of rank (Wilkes 1845, III:58). In 1834, what was probably this example had already been noticed by Warren Osborn, a *bêche-de-mer* trader from Salem:

“Pearl shells with the cross taken from their back, are worn by them [Fijians], some of these they consider very valuable, as they have been handed down from father to son for many generations. Old Snuff [Tanoa] has one which has been handed down in this way, it is broken and lashed together in many places, he always wears it upon his neck and takes great care of it.” (Osborn 1833-35)

The subsequent history of the artefact confirmed Osborn’s statement, though it is unlikely this example predates 1800 (Steven Hooper, personal communication). Tanoa’s breastplate ended up at the CUMAA in 1918, after Sir Arthur Gordon (the first Governor of Fiji) had received it as a gift, probably from Cakobau (Tanoa’s son) in 1875-80.

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<sup>9</sup> Tui Cakau is the senior chiefly title in Cakaudrove in north-eastern Fiji. It comprises the eastern part of Vanualevu and Taveuni Island. Yavala was Tui Cakau from approximately 1829 to 1845.





1.8— “Tanoa” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:58)



1.9— CUMAA, 1918.213.14

### *Literature*

The above examples have shown the value of historical literary sources *in relation to museum collections*. Yet, they too must be critically assessed. Most literary references used here, published or not, have a Western origin. Even though such texts “derive from a dynamic interplay” and therefore also comprise “indigenous countersigns,” or “the oblique stamp of indigenous actions, desires and agency” (Douglas 1999:68), they contrast with museum objects that, in essence, embody the agencies of both Fijian and Euro-American actors. In this thesis they will therefore be regarded as subsidiary sources, carefully contextualized with reference to their general and individual backgrounds of making.

Obeyesekere (1998) and others (e.g. Robineau-Weber 2004, Gregor 1998) warned us about the tendency of sailors to transform ethnographic facts into “yarns” (Obeyesekere 1998:71), for the purpose of their own fame as well as for stylistic

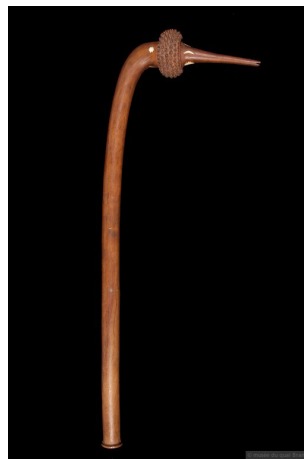
reasons. Robineau-Weber summarized this in the title of her book: “*A beau mentir qui vient de loin.*” This old French expression means that those whose stories cannot be checked can basically say anything they like. Robineau-Weber therefore encouraged us to observe the stylistic patterns present in naval accounts. They related them to a specific literary genre, that of the voyager’s account, with its own models, conventions and filiations (2004:11-14). Moreover, Berty (2002) explained how such codes conditioned not only the narratives but the observations from which they stemmed. For example, she insisted on the primacy of colonial and orientalist discourses over actual observations during European voyages to the Orient in the nineteenth century (Berty 2002:25ff.).

By insisting on the discrepancies that existed between the maritime journal and the published account of Hyacinthe de Bougainville, Gregor (1998), like Obeyesekere (1998:70-71), shed light on the variety of texts that seamen and other Western travellers could produce. Taking this plurality into consideration, this thesis favoured daily narratives of events by eye-witnesses where they existed. Secondary publications often resulted from rearrangements. For instance, although it is usually admitted that missionaries were among the most active “ethnographers” of early Fiji (see chapter 5), all their writings do not have the same value. This study privileged primary information, found notably in missionary journals and archives (e.g. accounts, lists of converted souls and teachers), over general interpretative conclusions found in books. Thus, the journal of Thomas Williams (Henderson 1931a) was considered more informative than his book (1982 [1858]), which summarized missionary perceptions of the islands and their inhabitants.

### *Pictorial sources*

To some extent, pictorial sources may be seen as halfway between material objects and literary sources. Like written accounts, images mainly stemmed from the Western side of exchanges. Yet, inherently, they function in different ways than textual documents (Douglas 1999:66-68). Hence, Douglas argued it is possible, as with texts, to “deploy them, against the grain of their prejudices... as resources for writing ethnohistories” (*Ibid.*:65); and she efficiently demonstrated her point by discussing illustrations from d’Entrecasteaux’s (*Ibid.*:73-76) and other voyages.

Now, although most historical images depict actual objects and events, discrepancies are frequently observable between identified items and their representation by eighteenth or nineteenth-century artists.<sup>10</sup> Aside from variations in talent, many divergences can be attributed to material and intellectual constraints. Voyagers' illustrations often show the influence of European stylistic codes on "exotic" pictures (Le Fur 2006:175; Smith 1985) — which does not necessarily undermine native agencies (Thomas 1999:8). Most representations resulted from *in situ* sketching, for which the conditions of making varied (e.g. light, weather, time of day, length of the event). A number of drawing and engraving steps followed, in the process of which transformations happened due to stylistic, technical and memory reasons. Consequently, early representations of objects and events cannot be treated like photographic records or actual artefacts — and those can be misleading too. Possible inaccuracies and misrepresentations must be taken into account, contextualized and nuanced. As Douglas put it: "one needs to know what the authors/artists were thinking, seeing and representing *with* and *about* (*Ibid.*:68, original emphasis)." Nevertheless, historical illustrations may provide a great deal of evidence, *in relation to other sources*.<sup>11</sup>



1.10— MQB, 72.84.269

For example, there is a *totokia* club, or battle hammer, at the Musée du quai Branly (MQB). An old engraving helped in its identification, but not without difficulties. In 1992, Jacquemin attributed the weapon to Dumont d'Urville's first survey of Fiji, in

<sup>10</sup> Kaeppler implicitly highlighted such discordances when comparing Sarah Stone's watercolours with matching artefacts from the Leverian Museum (2011).

<sup>11</sup> See Thomas and Losche (1999) for an in-depth discussion on that topic.

1827. She compared the museum artefact (MQB 72.84.269) with an object depicted in the atlas of d'Urville's narrative (1835, Atlas I: pl.XC n°14) (Jacquemin 1992:50). I first agreed with the hypothesis (Leclerc 2007:74 & 217). Yet, I soon doubted the identification because of unclear data regarding the museum history of the object and because of discrepancies between the engraving and the MQB's artefact (Leclerc 2007: errata; 2008:177). The bulbous head of the club seemed bigger in the picture than on the actual object, and the general shape was more curved on the plate than in reality. Moreover, while the museum *totokia* showed a smooth undecorated shaft, the bottom part of the illustrated bludgeon looked engraved, and pierced for attachment. Nevertheless, striking resemblances existed. They included the position and shape of some ivory inlays on the club's head. Small stars and crescent moons matched an early period of acquisition, when whale ivory was still rare in Fiji, highly valued, and mainly manufactured by Tongan and Samoan craftsmen with a typical *maestria* (see chapters 3 & 4). More strikingly, the pointed end of the MQB's item showed traces of an old embedded piece, now missing. The club on the plate seemed also to have an ivory beak. Eventually, the distinctive nature of these features convinced me that the two objects were most probably the same.<sup>12</sup> The pictorial inaccuracies could be attributed to the memory of the artist, L.A. de Sainson. He had probably seen a number of Fijian clubs, some of which must have had carved and pierced handles.<sup>13</sup> The sketching and engraving processes may also be implicated in the change of the club's appearance. It is finally possible that de Sainson, or the publisher, wanted to embellish the weapon by adding some designs and curves to it. In nineteenth-century Europe, ornament was considered a fundamental feature of any work of art (Owen 2001; Barbillon 2000). One may have tried to emphasize the beauty of that *totokia vonotabua*, from a European perspective.

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<sup>12</sup> The only other specimen I found approaching this description in five years of museum research is now in Maidstone (MMBAG). It is likely to be related to Brenchley's voyage (1865), although it has no catalogue number. Its carving seems rougher than that of the MQB's *totokia*.

<sup>13</sup> Such décors are indeed very common on Fijian clubs in museums, though usually of slightly later collection date.

## Theoretical framework

### Exchange rather than collecting: a personal history of the research

My interest in Fijian early material culture started in 2006. My first M.A. thesis was concerned with the earliest Fijian artefacts of the Musée du quai Branly (Paris). This collection had a complex history. It comprised about 160 objects, which had all transited through several museums. The *Musée des Antiquités Nationales* (MAN), now *Musée d'Archéologie Nationale* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye), was the common denominator. I consequently framed my research around the concept of *collection* — that of Saint-Germain (Leclerc 2007). I considered the objects as passive entities, onto which various lights had been shed according to museums and times. By the end of this work, I was not satisfied with the approach. Especially, I regretted how much it obscured the initial story of the items, before they had become museum objects.

Subsequently, my second M.A. thesis considered early museum objects as *collected objects*. It aimed to highlight the general circumstances and individual motivations that brought Fijian artefacts to France, with specific reference to Dumont d'Urville's surveys of Fiji (Leclerc 2008). Again, I realized that the line of attack was inadequate. The concept of *collecting* implied a one-way process. It undermined the interactive nature of the encounters between Fijian islanders and French sailors. And yet, the more I looked at the objects, the more I understood how actively involved Fijians were in early transactions with foreigners. That is when I resolved to refer to early museum objects from Fiji as *exchanged objects*.

Considering museum items as exchanged artefacts rather than collected articles is a rhetorical and a methodological posture, induced by a personal intellectual journey. In particular, it intends to underline the significance of the vocabulary employed in this thesis and in similar studies (see below). However, the recent literature on collecting, already evoked (e.g. Clifford 1988, Küchler 1997, O'Hanlon 1993, O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000, Gosden and Knowles 2001, Jacobs 2011), also treats collections as the result of complex encounters. It has been integrated in our theoretical discussion.

Similarly, a number of scholars now present complex views of early contacts in the Pacific. The model they provide proved useful in this research too (see Thomas 1991, 2010; Salmond 1991, 1997; Thomas & Losche 1999; Jolly *et al.* 2009).

## Material culture, agency and non-verbal communication

Looking at museum items as exchanged or traded goods implies they are vectors and means in the exchanges. Accordingly, this thesis examines how Fijians and Westerners interacted and related through material objects.

This focus on material things can be linked with what we call “visual anthropology” or “anthropology of art,” in which the study of “materiality” and “material culture” may be included.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, such concepts are problematic in their definitions. Miller (2005), for instance, shed light on a major paradox. In daily language, the material world is opposed to things that are considered transcendent or meaningful. It is therefore more or less a synonym of trivial. Yet, the immaterial paradigms that shape any quest for human elevation (e.g. philosophical, religious) are often related to material things. In many cases, “material culture” offers a tangible path to such paradigms (Miller 2005:1-4). Following on from this idea, the study of material items regained a key place in post-structuralist anthropological investigations (*Ibid.*:5-7).

In anthropology too the term “material culture” has a broader definition than mere “artefacts” — i.e. man-made objects. Its examination may include the study of techniques (the how) and styles (its visual results), or of entire processes described since Leroi-Gourhan (1943, 1945) as “*chaines opératoires*,” or operational sequences. They may also refer to less tangible cultural instruments, such as the human body or a whole ritual sequence, regarded as visual expressions of a given culture. To further complicate the matter, notions such as ephemeral versus durable, living versus inert, objects versus subjects and natural versus artificial could be discussed, if it were our purpose.

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<sup>14</sup> This thesis will not enter in any debate about what is art, and what is not. Any artefact, which may be considered a material manifestation of Fijian early times, and more importantly an object of exchange between Fijians and Westerners, may be included. The question of aesthetics has thus been left aside, having very few repercussions in our approach. This study will therefore prefer terms such as “material culture” and “visual anthropology” over “works of art” and “anthropology of art.” Yet, theories using art-related vocabulary have been decisive for our reflection. When mentioning them, the author’s terminology has been preserved.

Visual anthropology is also a problematic field, variously defined by several authors (e.g. Morphy & Banks 1997, Hockings 1975). During these investigations, visual anthropology was mainly regarded as “a subdiscipline of sociocultural anthropology” (Morphy & Banks 1997:1), i.e. as the anthropology of “visual systems,” in the largest definition of those, and their “strategies for engaging with the world” (*Ibid.*:30-31). Due to its main focus on Fijian things which ended up in museums after having been exchanged, this thesis pays more attention to Fijian visual systems than to European and American ones. Similarly, the way of conducting anthropological research via visual supports such as movies and photographs — which did not exist in the period under consideration — interests us to a lesser extent.

Now, the scope of this study narrows its object by itself. This thesis focuses on “things”<sup>15</sup> — i.e. material objects — that were exchanged by Fijians and Euro-Americans between 1774 and 1854, and which are now in museums. Consequently, it is mainly concerned with *small and medium artefacts*, transportable and compatible with the space available on Euro-American sailing vessels. It excludes cultural products with huge dimensions (e.g. canoes, architectural forms) or immaterial in nature (e.g. dances, songs). Their material components (e.g. dancing ornaments, musical instruments) along with some small replicas (e.g. miniature temples) may, however, be taken into account.

From an art-historical perspective, this study intends to examine the stylistic, material and technical evolutions represented in museums, where series of objects can be identified and sequenced for the period under consideration (1774-1854). Such mutations, it is hoped, will inform a broader range of cultural transformations in Fiji’s early times, as well as the changing relations of Fijians and Westerners.

For this purpose, one key reference will be whale ivory. Today, ceremonial whale’s teeth (*tabua*) are commonly acknowledged as the greatest valuables in Fiji (Hooper 2013), especially in the eastern, northern and central islands of the group, on which this study focuses because they were the location of most of Fiji-West early exchanges. Artefacts made of whale ivory are frequently regarded as masterpieces in museum collections from Fiji. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to discuss such contemporary views, but the superior value of whale ivory will be used as a reference for the study of historical exchanges. When did whale ivory circulate between Fijians and Euro-Americans? In what direction? Under what forms? Towards what ends? And what other materials could bear the comparison with it, during the historical times of interest here?

From an anthropological viewpoint, this thesis mostly alludes to two definitions. The first one is that of *art as a non-verbal form of communication* defined by Forge (1973). In contrast to some of his contemporaries (e.g. Munn 1973), Forge considered that art could not be analysed as a language *per se*, and that a work of art could therefore not be divided into semiotic-like units of significance (1973:xvii). Instead, it should be

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<sup>15</sup> It must be noted here, that “things” is not necessarily a neutral term either. It is employed here in opposition to living articles. Yet, the notion of inert or material “things” does not imply that such articles were deprived of an agency of their own, on the contrary (see Harrison 2013:15-16).

considered within a whole “symbolic system,” built on multiple references.<sup>16</sup> These may apply simultaneously and be variously assessed by several recipients (Forge 1973:xviii-xix). Once associated, the specific set of references, symbols and groups of symbols render tangible and visible the unspeakable. It is the case, for instance, of the figures of the *haus tambaran*, in the Abelam society (Forge 1973:187-189, 191). Similarly, in this thesis the exceptional nature of high social status in Fiji will be considered. Material objects such as Tanoa’s breastplate (above) rendered status visible. It is one of this thesis’ purposes to analyse how they did so, and how such symbols could be variously comprehended by several protagonists. Forge indeed underlined that the main problem remains “the accessibility of such [symbolic] systems to the anthropologist or other outside observers” (1973:xix). That hindrance will be further discussed in this chapter and during the thesis, with regard to the different sets of references available since the eighteenth century. The possibility of comparisons and coalitions between Fijian and Western categories will be addressed.

The second definition used here is that of *agency*, formulated by Gell (1998). It helps us to go a step ahead from Forge’s definition. For Gell, a work of art was above all an “index” of human intentions, or “agencies,” like the smoke is an index of fire (1998:13). Such agencies can be related to the concept of “action,” examined below with reference to Sahlin (1985) and Graeber (2001). Like the actions that shape the objects’ values (see next part), Gell’s agencies are of various kinds, dependant on several factors. These include the nature of the “artist,” responsible for the technical and visual characteristics of the index. They are also related to the identity and intentions of the “recipients,” who exert an agency via the index or in relation to whom the index exerts an agency. Finally, agencies are made tangible with reference to “prototypes,” to which the index is connected visually, materially and symbolically (Gell 1998:27). Such prototypes may be related to Forge’s “symbols.”

A major challenge of this thesis resides in the identification of such symbolic references within the specific contexts of Fiji-West early transactions. A more strictly anthropological reflection about exchange and value may help with that difficulty.

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<sup>16</sup> Distinctions between language and non-verbal “vehicles of meaning” had already been formulated by the philosopher S. Langer, in 1942, with reference to two different types of symbolism, the first one “linear and diachronic” (“discursive symbolism”) and the second “holistic and simultaneous” (“presentational symbolism”) (see Douglas 1999:66-68).



## About the presumed asymmetry of exchanges

“Exchange,” like “materiality,” is a loaded term in anthropology. Existing theories provide a wonderful set for analysis, as well as a complicated burden to carry and manipulate. Notwithstanding, the word “exchange” only implies the symmetry this thesis intends to highlight, between two parties chiefly considered as *exchange partners*. Such a vocabulary, however, requires methodological and theoretical precision.

Early in the research process a problem arose; talking about exchange was not enough to express a possible mutuality of Fiji-West historical relations. Exchanges could still be regarded as asymmetric; and they often were, as this quote from William Lockerby<sup>17</sup> suggests:

“On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May [1809] I went about ten miles up the river Embagaba to a village where I was told there was a large lot of Sandlewood; but the owners wanted a large whale’s tooth for it, and I had not one to give. As the ship had almost completed here cargo, I wished very much to get this parcel. To accomplish my end I made use of a stratagem that answered the purpose. I told the native that the ship’s Callow,<sup>18</sup> making him understand this to be the figure of General Wellesley at the ship’s head (in full uniform), had sent me for the wood and ordered me to pay for in ironwork... After a good deal of persuasion I was prevailed upon to take off the taboo, and received a lot of wood as a present to the ship’s Callow. It was soon carried down to the boat with more yams, plantains, &c. than it could contain... Afterwards I made them a present of a quantity of iron and beads, of far more value to them than a whale’s tooth, if they could have understood their own interests.” (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:63-64)

Asymmetric exchanges imply a pair of dominating and dominated parties, one of whom is active and the other passive, one winning the deal while the other fails to obtain sufficient benefit. This is precisely what Lockerby seems to describe here. This is a classical dialectic in the investigation of human relations, especially when those are examined through the prism of power. Yet, it is highly subjective. From a Western point of view, the second role (the subordinate or passive one) was almost systematically played by Non-Western people (see Thomas 1991:84-85) — even though this has recently been interpreted as a form of naivety (Sahlins 1993:851). It is possible, in fact, that the Fijians who interacted with White men felt like *they* benefited from the deals, at least as much as their Western partners and perhaps even more than them. For instance, the above quote does not take in account the value of “a large whale’s tooth” for the inhabitants of western Vanualevu, where the scene takes place. It also excludes the strategic move that an offering to the ship’s “Callow” may have represented for the

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<sup>17</sup> Lockerby was a sandalwood trader, active in Fiji in the early 1800s.

<sup>18</sup> In standard Fijian, a modern spelling would be *kalou* (i.e. god or spirit).

villagers. This given, an asymmetry perceived by *both* exchange partners would rather argue in favour of equitable exchanges.

Methodologically, the question of symmetry and asymmetry is a starting point. It allow us to evaluate the relevance of anthropological and philosophical theories for this thesis' topic, while helping to determine the best methodological angles in the analysis of Fiji-West early exchanges.

### *Asymmetry, anthropology and philosophy of exchange*

There are two principal obstacles to understand a possible symmetry or asymmetry in Fiji-West early transactions. The first one resides in comprehending the nature of the transactions themselves. What type of relations did Fijian and Western exchange partners build? Does it matter, for instance, if these were commercial or diplomatic in nature — these categories not being exclusive? The second difficulty consists in assessing the values and agencies at stake, attributed to exchanged things and exchange partners by both parties, and their relevance for our symmetry-asymmetry concern. A number of anthropological theories of exchange and value may help with those hindrances, along with a few philosophical reflections on desire.

### *On Western and cross-cultural categories*

Going back to what most scholars would consider the origin of the anthropology of exchange, Mauss's *Essai sur le don* (2004 [1923]) (*The Gift*) gives us matter to start. Beside his well-known argument about the debt and interdependence that the sequence "giving, receiving, and giving-back" induces, Mauss highlighted several features of the *gift* that are fundamental here. Notably, he pointed out the competitive nature and intrinsic dimension of rivalry that exist in most exchange relations (2004:187–189; 200), to the point that in many cases a winner (or superior entity) and a loser (or subordinate entity) can actually be identified (2004:269–270). Hocart confirmed that such a vocabulary existed in Fiji, applied to exchange circumstances (Hocart 1929:78).

Mauss also argued that every exchange partner is virtually *other*, and that he or she can even be perceived as an adversary in essence (2004:277–278), even though they may be actual allies to *ego* (2004:205). It will be demonstrated below that this is in fact a *sine qua non* condition for the exchange to happen.

Furthermore, Mauss placed every individual (*personne physique*) under the governance of one or several collective entities (*personnes morales*) (2004:150).<sup>19</sup> Via legal analogies, he defined the *gift* as a more or less explicit contract between exchanging parties, whether *personnes physiques*, *personnes morales* or one acting in the name of the other (2004:154, 161-162, 200, 211).

These three features of Mauss' *gift* are decisive because they theoretically apply to each exchange situation and every exchange partner, whatever the nature and moment of the transaction, the initial relation of the protagonists or their cultural origin. In particular, it means there is virtually no difference for analysis between Fiji-Fiji and Fiji-West exchanges; and it also suggests that some comparisons between modern and historical transactions are possible. In each case, exchange partners were at odds with each other. In the same time, each partner was subject to collective schemes that dictated individual and group behaviours. Put another way, Mauss' definitions open a large array of possible comparisons between local and cross-cultural transactions, throughout history.

This given, it will be crucial, in this thesis, to determine what kind of exchange(s) took place between Fijians and Euro-Americans. Therefore, it will be important to highlight the models which may have served as prototypes to them. For instance, were *solevu*,<sup>20</sup> large public offerings with a ceremonial dimension, the main reference? Or were *kerekere*, i.e. requests sometimes interpreted as "begging" by Europeans (Sahlins 1962:203; 1993:855) or even as "looting" (chapter 3), the norm?

The difference is decisive. *Solevu* involve(d) large quantities of *iyau* (valuables) and imply(ied) demonstrative prestations and counter-prestations, symmetrically observable. Historically and recently alike, *solevu* were held to build and maintain cooperative relationships and alliances. They inherently induce(d) a form of reciprocity (Thomas 1991:63), as well as what Hooper translated as a "battle of abundance" (2013:124). *Kerekere*, in contrast, did not imply long-term preparation nor

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<sup>19</sup> Mauss did not actually use the expression "*personne physique*." It is employed here for clarity purposes, since it is very much used in French law today in contrast with "*personne morale*." An alternative term would have been *individu* (individual).

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, in 1926, i.e. three years after Mauss' *Essai sur le don*, Hocart explicitly compared the Fijian *solevu*, which he had otherwise described as a "festival" or "ceremonial exchange," with the most famous form of sacrificial exchange: the Potlatch (1926:206n). Ten years later, he insisted on the inherent rivalry observable during *solevu*, with an example from Vitilevu's highlands taken from a local Gazette, which used the word "potlatch" in 1896 (Hocart 1970:270).

any direct return. Rather, it “is in a form of aid given to those who need by those who can afford it” (Sahlins 1962:205), with a loose notion of reciprocation.

It is also possible that other forms of material transactions applied. For instance, in the context of war surrender, would *isoro* (ritual apology in Fiji) or European military practices have prevailed? Alternatively, would it be more accurate to compare Fiji-West exchange relations to straightforward barter<sup>21</sup> or trade? It will be explained below and in the next chapters that several forms of transactions co-existed between Fijians and early Western visitors. It is the argument of this thesis that their identification is possible through investigation of the artefacts involved, themselves representative of social relations between given exchange partners, either pre-set or contingent. Henceforth, it will be important to be able to characterize the manner in which objects — and subjects via them — acted in different kind of exchanges. By chance, a number of authors have now investigated that question, providing us with a broadly acknowledged glossary of exchange terms and practices that will now be discussed.

Following on from Mauss’s *Gift* a number of scholars endeavoured to theoretically investigate gift exchanges and their alternative, exchanges of commodities. Mauss worked on the idea that gift exchanges were central in a number of societies. These, he said, are not necessarily deprived of market economy, but their regime of exchanges globally differs from ours (2004:148, 193). Gift exchanges imply equivalences (or overbids) between what is given and what is given back, even though the reciprocation does not necessarily require immediacy. A social contract bonds the exchanging parties together and dictates their trading practices; and this applied notably to the hill tribes of Fiji described by Brewster in 1922, where *tabua* were contract makers *par excellence* (Mauss 2004:191). As discussed below, such ideas of contract and reciprocation may be problematic in the investigation of Fiji-West early exchange relations. The difficulty stems, in part, from the cross-cultural nature of such interactions. In essence, they embraced a variety of agencies and diverse understandings of what the transactions meant and induced. The following chapters will show that some of these agencies, especially European ones, could hardly be applied to Mauss’ gift theory of debt — in particular of a mutually understood and consensual debt.

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<sup>21</sup> See Thomas (1991) for critical definitions of the *barter*, along with remarks on what that terminology has implied in European literature, notably in terms of symmetry and asymmetry (1991:10-11, 84-85).

To elucidate such cultural shocks, Gregory (1982) studied the implications of a methodological distinction between gifts and commodities, and by extension between gift economy and commodity economy. In commodity economy, he stated, the material equivalence between objects is crucial. In gift economy, in contrast, the relationship between exchanging subjects matters the most (Gregory 1982:41-42). Put another way, in the first case it is the relation between traded articles that prevails, while in the second it is that of exchange partners. Thomas summarized Gregory's dichotomy by underlining a series of oppositions it induces (1991:14-15). In particular, he noted that exchanges of commodities imply fully "alienable" items — i.e. articles that bear no attachment to their previous owner — and henceforth an "independence" of the exchanging parties. Gifts entail the opposite. What is the relevance of such dichotomies in the understanding of Fiji-West early transactions? Could one say, for example, that they consisted in encounters of the two systems?

Strathern made a huge step forward by building upon Gregory's idea that the relationship is central in Melanesia (1988:134, 161, 221). With reference to what she called the "Melanesian symbolism" (*Ibid.*:244), she demonstrated that a majority of material products from her fieldwork area — New Guinea's highlands — were inalienable *per se*. In consequence, she invited scholars to distance themselves from "cultural categories" (1988:145) and cleavages; and this between research disciplines (feminist debates versus anthropology) as well as between segregated rather than complementary conceptions of men's and women's roles in exchanges (*Ibid.*:269). She thus opened new perspectives in the evaluation of what may appear, at first, as asymmetric relations but are, in fact, powerful systems of cooperation between individual agents (*Ibid.*:284-285, 328). Following on from Strathern's model, this thesis seeks to examine Fiji-West transactions from a less Euro-centric angle.

In parallel to Strathern and Gregory's work, Weiner methodologically differentiated "alienable" from "inalienable" forms of wealth in Melanesia (1985, 1992). In contrast to her peers, she did not oppose the two categories. Rather, she tried to interpret degrees of exchangeability as a reflection of value. Especially, she demonstrated that techniques to "keep-while-giving" exist in Melanesia, which eventually allows most things to circulate even though some remain virtually immobile. Ultimately, she said, there are "two classes of inalienable possessions: those that should never circulate and those that under certain circumstances may be given to others either

on loan, as copies, or in return for an object of the same kind” (1985:212). Following on from her argument, rather than “what was in circulation?”, the relevant question in this thesis might be: “how, when and in which circumstances things circulated between Fijians and Westerners?” In other words, what was the alienability and exchangeability of things from 1774 to 1854?

In his critique of Mauss, Godelier (1996) refined Weiner’s proposals by distinguishing inalienable items that are “precious” and yet tradable, from things that are “sacred” and therefore should not be alienated at all (1996:101). In 2004, using comparisons between Occidental and Extra-Occidental forms of exchange, he sought to elaborate on the above remarks:

“In our societies, buying and selling have become the main activities. Selling means completely separating the thing from the person. Giving means maintaining something of the person in the thing given. And keeping means not separating the thing from the person because in this union resides the affirmation of a historical identity that must be passed on, at least until such time as it can no longer be reproduced. It is because these three operations—selling, giving, and keeping—are not the same that objects in these contexts are presented respectively as alienable and alienated (commodities), as inalienable but alienated (gift objects), and as inalienable and unalienated (sacred objects).” (Godelier 2004:19)

Given the possibility of comparisons between Western, Fijian and cross-cultural transactions (above), this thesis retained and used Godelier’s categories to evaluate the nature of Fiji-West exchange relations and the value of their objects.

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that mere confrontations between European and non-European systems are not fully relevant, nor would be the transfer of one’s categories onto another’s. In fact, following on from Mauss’s, Gregory’s and Strathern’s theories, the two forms of Fijian exchanges already mentioned (*solevu* and *kerekere*) could be described as *gift exchanges*. Yet, both types included the transfer of valuables (*iyau*) which, as Thomas demonstrated (1991), are neither compatible nor incompatible with the Western paradigms of “gifts” and “commodities,” or with those of “alienable” and “inalienable.” They are rather different. *Iyau* are indeed precious objects, sometimes *tabu* (sacred<sup>22</sup>) ones, which are meant to be alienated (Thomas 1991:67-68). The next chapters will examine the forms of exchange in which *iyau* were involved from 1774 to 1854, between Fijians and Euro-Americans. They will demonstrate that these were mostly contingent on the social relations of their successive keepers. In other

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<sup>22</sup> See discussion on the word *tabu* at the end of this chapter

words, whether gifts or commodities are appropriate designations depended on the spheres of action and on the protagonists' agencies at a given moment.

In general, Thomas denounced discourses of cultural relativism that would rely on binary attempts to distinguish Western from Non-Western societies (see also Thomas 1999:5). As he put it: "... there should be a movement of perspective from economic abstractions to historical forms" (1991:15-16). He added:

"I do not repudiate the dichotomy... I seek to relocate and displace versions of these various theories and points of departure in ethnographic cases and historical narratives." (Thomas 1991:33-34)

This is the model this thesis seeks to follow too; but in the case of the present study "ethnographic cases" and "historical narratives" tend to merge. Henceforth, historical and cultural relativisms need to be combined (see final part of this chapter). Now, while this thesis agrees with Thomas that objects involved in Pacific-West historical contacts should be regarded as "entangled," i.e. caught up between culturally dependant intentions and submitted to specific momentary issues regarding their exchange, it seeks to distance itself from Thomas' terminology. In his attempt not to distinguish Western from non-Western systems, Thomas indeed referred to forms of "appropriations," "the indigenous appropriation of European things" and "the European appropriation of indigenous things." As Strathern underlined (1994:1015) the word "appropriation" hardly applies to indigenous systems from the Pacific (see also chapter 6). Rather, she suggested "empowerment" could have been used. This is the kind of issue this thesis hopes to avoid by using the word "exchange," for it is precisely its argument that museum items from early Fiji have been exchanged rather than appropriated.

Now, going back to our symmetry-asymmetry concern, the following remarks will briefly investigate transversal patterns of exchanges. This discussion began with the identification of the three key features of Mauss's *Gift* (above). In the same vein, it now seeks to demonstrate that certain forms of asymmetry are prerequisites for any exchange to happen. Paradoxically, they argue in favour of a certain likeness of exchange partners' intentions and methods, independent from cultural origins.

### On sacrifice

After Mauss, Appadurai used an economic model in his introduction to *The Social Life of Things* (1986). With reference to Simmel (1978), he reminded us that economic-like exchanges — i.e. exchanges that imply something given away and something received in

return, preferably something dividable and countable — are always *exchanges of sacrifices* (1986:4). Each party resigns to a calculated sacrifice, in the hope of obtaining something worth of it in return. This fundamental concept underlines the divergent and yet symmetrical posture of each and every exchange partner *vis-à-vis* the other.

This may particularly well apply to early transactions between Fijians and Euro-Americans if we consider that one at least of their economic models has been described as “sacrificial:” the Fijian one (Anspach 1988:6-9; Hooper 2013:155). In sacrificial economies, as they have been defined by Hubert and Mauss (1899) and then by Mauss alone (1923), some objects are physically rendered absent to achieve their ultimate ritual purpose. They may be left to rot, deposited or destroyed. They thus become gifts to the gods or pure mnemonic images (Küchler 1997:42). Küchler thought about such sacrifices in relation to museum collections. She argued it is possible to compare and substitute the process of “object sacrifice” with that of “collecting.” The presence of sacrificial objects in museums would therefore be “a symptom of their collectability” (1997:40). Museum collections would comprise “the empty, hollow remains of objects of sacrifice that are evidence of an exchange into which we came quite unknowingly” (1997:49). In other words, collecting practices fortuitously fed into local symbolic systems. Hooper went further by considering that collecting, and from a Polynesian viewpoint giving away, could be regarded as an act of iconoclasm, which paradoxically allowed some artefacts to keep exerting an agency (Hooper 2008:122). In addition to shedding light on indigenous agencies, these arguments raise several questions, including that of the consciousness that each partner has of the other’s intentions, as well as of the relative values of exchanged objects. In other words, how did European and Fijian actors evaluate what was given to/traded with them? And did their understanding — or misunderstanding — condition future transactions?

### On value

Appadurai solved this issue in part, by reminding us of Simmel’s argument according to which value “is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgment made about them by subjects” (Appadurai 1986:3). The determination of value is therefore primarily subjective and relative; and in fact exchanged objects “circulate in different *regimes of value* in space and time” (1986:4, original emphasis). As a result, it seems there is no need for a common assessment of value between exchange partners. On the contrary, a



similar estimate would render the sacrifice, and therefore the exchange, far less interesting or even impossible. Nevertheless, Appadurai argued that at the very moment of the transaction “the value of the object is determined reciprocally.” Put another way, a specific value is generated by the exchange itself (1986:3-4).

Again, Appadurai described that *exchange value* as economic. Yet, the concepts of *sacrificial economy* and *gift*, along with those of *non-verbal communication* (Forge 1973) and *agency* (Gell 1998), already suggest that we cannot solely refer to “economy” to understand the values attributed to objects by subjects — and *vice versa*. For instance, key components of that estimation can be found in religion and politics, to which Mauss would have added law and aesthetics (2004:274). Said otherwise, exchange relations must be examined within their global, cultural and historical context rather than seen as isolated events between secluded individuals. Exchanges are a place where, Sahlins considers, “structure” and “event” coincide, especially since “a material transaction is usually a momentary episode in a continuous social relation” (1972:185–186).

By studying exchanges as moments in continuous historical processes — i.e. as the momentary results of changing combinations between social, political, religious and economic factors — we go back to the idea that the exchangeability of things is symptomatic of their exchange values at a given moment. In particular, Graeber stressed that it is the awareness of exchanged items that ultimately creates their value and status, notably as “tokens of value” rather than “valuables” themselves (Graeber 2001:81). Indubitably, exchanges are moments during which attention is drawn onto objects. The value(s) they carry is somehow measured and compared. And this raises, again, the question of equivalence, *a priori* relevant for our symmetry-asymmetry concern but which does not seem so pertinent here any more.

According to Foster, eventually exchange “becomes a process in which actors construct their differential value to each other — instead of the equal value or equivalence of their objects — through the circulation of specific items in specific contexts” (1990:56). Here again, the transaction is described as a competitive process from which value emerges. Yet, like in Graeber and Weiner’s studies, it is not a question of the sole value of the exchanged items. The relative value of the protagonists is also at stake, linked to their prestige and reputation (Weiner 1992:136). Both types of value are interdependent, and also related to exchange circumstances. These are themselves tributary of social and symbolic criteria such as the rank of the partners and the iconic

significances of the exchanged things. Foster therefore concluded that: “Value needs imply neither equivalence nor measurability. Indeed, the conflation of value with equivalence is likely to impede our understanding of the specific meanings which Melanesians ascribe to their exchanges” (Foster 1990:66–67). And indeed it has been noted that in Fiji the reciprocation often takes/took another form than that of the initial prestation (see Thomas 1991:63; Gatty 2009:113; Hooper 2013). This was of course sensitive between Fijians and Euro-Americans, who, in essence, did not provide the same kind of goods — and services — as is the case nowadays between urban and islander relatives (see Hooper 2013:123, 127). Yet, we will see in the next chapters that a certain understanding and insertion into the other’s value systems was crucial, in a number of cross-cultural transactions.

Appadurai provided an explanation for such acknowledgments. He explained that what shapes the economic value of things is ultimately political. He also argued that value preferably emerges from competitive processes, which he called “tournaments of value,” i.e. “complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routine of economic life” (1986:21). In a broader way, Graeber considered that value is created, maintained and developed in action, and more precisely in “creative actions.” Like Appadurai’s “tournaments of value,” Graeber’s “creative actions” consist in specific events, including demonstrative exchange ceremonies and chiefly performances — sometimes concomitant (e.g. *moka* exchanges in the highlands of New Guinea or *solevu* in Fiji). During such events, underlying forces get materially embodied and value circulates (Graeber 2001:81).<sup>23</sup> Put another way, such events allow the transactors to reach a closer understanding of what their partners value and expect. The exchanges themselves provide some keys for cross-cultural assessments.

Of course, this also reminds us of Sahlins’ argument according to which culture is “historically reproduced” and “altered in action” (1985:vii). Importantly here, Sahlins added an historical dimension into his contextualization endeavour.

To summarize, the preceding invites us to think about exchanges as culturally defined events, competitive in nature and unique *per se*, even though they remain part of continuous historical processes. Value has been described as a sum of subjective

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<sup>23</sup> That is why “creative actions” are so important culturally speaking, needing frequent re-enactments. In Fiji, for example, such a circulation traditionally occurred during ritual installation of chiefs (*veibuli*) or in the course of first-fruits ceremonies (*isevu*). In some areas these seem to have coincided (Hocart 1927a:189–190). And that also explains why the identification of such events and of their constitutive patterns is essential. They provide key references for comparative analysis.

assessments, although culturally and socially dependent. The confrontation of such estimates seems to politically, materially and culturally delineate the price of traded things, as well as the prestige of exchange partners, via the reciprocal sacrifices they make. One strategy this thesis adopted is the detailed examination of specific historical events, with reference to contextual symbolic systems as far as those could be identified. By looking at precise historical instances with particular attention to material objects, it is hoped that things and actions can be ranked and compared, on a symbolic level rather than in terms of strict equivalence. This might seem problematic considering quite divergent structures (Western and Fijian), which furthermore varied through time and space. Yet, exchange partners being essentially foreign to one another, each transaction may be seen as an encounter of value systems as well as of individual and collective agencies. Thus, if an exchanged item results from a sum of actions and attributed values, these can be differently assessed by each protagonist. As long as both parties “come to terms” (Sahlins 1972:187) the patterns seem symmetrically observable.

### On desire

Of course, the above developments on competition and value assessment can also be related to the philosophical question of desire. Graeber summarized: “value, after all is something that mobilizes the desire of those who recognize it, and moves them to action” (Graeber 2001:105). Hobbes discussed a dynamic role of desire. Interestingly he did so in terms of rivalry and competition. For Hobbes, desire is a synonym for lack and that lack is constantly re-created, keeping people and things moving (2000[1651]:87; 187–188). In Hobbes’ philosophy, precisely because it is competitive the desire is reflective too. Due to the virtual similarity of the human “passions,” the other’s desire may conflict with one’s wishes (*Ibid.*:66). To desire therefore induces a struggle for power, more or less latent (*Ibid.*:188–189). If we extrapolate, it means that one may want to possess what the other wants as a source of power. That dimension was probably vivid in a number of early transactions between Fijians and Euro-Americans. For example, Fijian leaders were eager to control stocks and access to sandalwood (*yasi*) and bêche-de-mer (*dri*), highly prized by European and American traders (chapter 3). Similarly, Western ship-crews massively traded whale’s teeth (*tabua*) among themselves, for the main purpose of exchanging them with Fijians (chapter 3).

Interestingly, this implies an additional level of rivalry, within each side of the exchange partnership rather than solely between them.

In contrast however, Sahlins noticed from his analysis of Mauss' *Gift* that the exchange itself could act like a *social contract* in the philosophical meaning of the word. It may put an end to a situation of struggle, bringing peace between opposed parties, like the State would have in Hobbes' philosophy (Sahlins 1972:186). However, this would only happen temporarily and to a lesser level than with a political contract. Indeed, as we will see in the next part, symmetry and reciprocity do not signify the end of the conflict, nor the definitive coalition of the adversaries (*Ibid.*:169-170). In essence, exchange partners remain distinct. The likeness of the desire being a primary cause of competition and conflict, it is even possible that such rivalries concerned traditional interlocutors more than cross-cultural partners. Regarding the cultural diversity observed on both sides of Fiji-West early exchanges, along with a number of common interests between them, the potentiality for struggle was no doubt more complex than one might imagine at first. Several levels of entangled rivalries must be taken in account, shedding light, again, on the fundamental necessity to historically and culturally contextualize our investigations, study cases and conclusions.

For Simone de Beauvoir too, to desire is a dynamic process; but for her it is because we project our wish into the thing we think may fulfil it. She wrote: "it is the desire that creates the desired, and the project that imposes the end" (Beauvoir (de) 1947, my translation).<sup>24</sup> Here, the desire induces the action in which the desired object is involved, including its sacrifice. It henceforth determines its value and completes the circle we began with Graeber's quote (above), in which value induced the desire.

As a result, being able to arouse someone's desire seems like an extremely powerful skill. Speaking of material things, this is especially interesting because Gell demonstrated that one of the main functions of artefacts would be to provoke desire — in his words to "enchant" (1992) or "captivate" (1998) — via visual and material qualities. How the material articles exchanged by Westerners and Fijians created and embodied desires until 1854 is one of this thesis' main concerns. In other words, the agency of the artefacts themselves should be investigated, along with that of transactors, for it seems that objects too had "an ability to make a difference" (Harrisson 2013:17,

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<sup>24</sup> « C'est le désir qui crée le désirable, et le projet qui pose la fin. »

emphasis removed). This is important for our value-assessment endeavour, and will, hopefully, contribute to a renewed understanding of Fiji-West early relations and related museum collections. Since Gell suggested that the visual aspect of things, intrinsic or given, is one of their principal modes of action, the identification of such visual effects, along with their material and symbolic associations, had a huge place in our museum investigations and subsequent analyses. In particular, this dissertation considers material, visual, circumstantial and symbolic correspondences in order to sequence exchanged things on a time-dependent scale of values.

### *Asymmetry and reciprocity within each side of Fiji-West interactions*

The preceding highlighted the necessity of a clear context for the analysis of Fiji-West early exchanges. In *Stone Age Economics* (1972), Sahlins demonstrated how the relative social positions of every protagonist conditioned the things that were exchanged as well as the way in which they were transacted. His typological analysis of socially-defined trading relations helps us to refine what is meant, in this dissertation, by symmetry or reciprocity, and therefore by asymmetry. In general, this thesis will use Sahlins' terminology to describe the forms of exchanges or "reciprocities" encountered in historical case studies.

Fundamentally, Sahlins distinguished two kinds of transactions:

"First, those 'vice-versa' movements between two parties, known familiarly as 'reciprocity'. The second, centralized movements: collection from members of a group, often under one hand, and redivision within this group. This is 'pooling' or 'redistribution'." (Sahlins 1972:188)

These two types may co-exist, for pooling is "*an organisation of reciprocities, a system of reciprocities* — a fact of central bearing upon the genesis of large-scale redistribution under chiefly aegis" (*Ibid.*:188, original emphasis). The main difference resides in the social modes of interaction they involve, and in the number of parties they imply:

"Pooling is socially a *within* relation, the collective action of a group. Reciprocity is a *between* relation, the action and reaction of two parties. Thus pooling is the complement of social unity and, in Polanyi's term, 'centricity'; whereas, reciprocity is social duality and 'symmetry'. Pooling stipulates a social center where goods meet and thence flow outwards, and a social boundary too, within which persons (or subgroups) are cooperatively related. But reciprocity stipulates two sides, two distinct social-economic interests. Reciprocity can establish solidary relations, insofar as the material flow suggests assistance or mutual benefit, yet the social fact of sides is inescapable." (Sahlins 1972:188–189, original emphasis)

Put another way, reciprocal transactions may be competitive or even confrontational, because they involve at least two parties with distinct interests. In contrast, centralized exchange relations ought to be cooperative; they only embrace one entity within which individuals are bound by common interest. Most Fiji-West early exchange relations can be seen as reciprocal, and henceforth described as competitive exchanges of sacrifices — it has been the case so far at a theoretical level. Yet, centralized models must be taken in account too, because they shaped the background of *between* relations, being found *within* each side of Fiji-West early transactions. In both camps, strong hierarchies were observable in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and within these a number of sub-divisions conditioned the way in which people interacted in a mixture of “vice-versa” and “centralized” movements.

Most ethnographers have described Fijian political constructions as pyramidal and highly hierarchized, from the nineteenth century until nowadays. In 1985, Sahlins provided a structural model for this organisation. He referred to its mythical origin as well as to its historical forms. In the highest sphere of power there was/is the *turaga*. From his reading of Hocart and other classical authors (e.g. Dumézil, de Saussure, Clastres), Sahlins (1985:78) described that paramount leader as a *stranger* in essence. The *turaga* thus contrasts with the local people (*itaukei*) over whom he has authority, the people of the land (*vanua*). Sahlins and his followers (e.g. Hooper 1996:246ff) explained how the *turaga* originally had to be symbolically “domesticated as a god of the indigenous people” (Sahlins 1985:75), an action that transformed his potentially harmful strength into a protective and fruitful asset for the local group (*Ibid.*:xv). Subsequently, the *turaga*’s power continued to need a re-assessment, via strategic empowerments. Some of them are still re-enacted today in several places of Fiji, notably in the northern, southern and eastern provinces of the group where most historical contacts with Westerners happened. And yet, the *turaga*’s supremacy remains inherently fragile (*Ibid.*:78).

Traditionally, the extra-ordinary nature of the *turaga* and the continuous process of his legitimacy entailed a flow of indigenous and foreign wealth toward him, and from him to his people, so that the Fijian cases provide a good illustration of Sahlins’ “pooling” systems. Until nowadays, the *turaga*’s power has been materially manifested by highly prized valuables (*iyau*), which reach and outflow from him in a variety of exchanges.

Such *iyau* notably include whale's teeth (*tabua*), sheets of barkcloth (*masi, gatu*), mats (*ibe*) and coconut sennit (*magimagi*). Today, they circulate in public ceremonies like the installation of the *turaga* (e.g. Sahlins 1985:75; Hooper 1996:260ff.), his funerals (*veibulu*) or the mourning lifting rituals which follow them (*vakataraisulu*). They also intervene in more modest events such as private weddings (*vakamau*) and funerals (*veibulu*). In fact, all these occasions imply a number of *between* and *within* movements, which aim to gather and redistribute an appropriate quantity of *iyau*. They take place inside a group and beyond it, also involving its social and political partners. Among such groups and between them, reciprocity is usually considered a moral duty. The return does not necessarily imply immediacy. Its absence on the other hand occasions a feeling of shame (*madua*) that may extent to the whole group (Ravuvu 1983:11-12). In contrast, "material loss is... compensated by social gain and recognition" (*Ibid.*:11). In other words, the value of each exchange partner increases in the reciprocal process of sacrificial exchanges.

Moreover, each Fijian party (*turaga* or *vanua*) comprises a number of sub-ranks (e.g. today: clans, family units, church groups). These also influence the nature and importance of the exchange flows, up and down the hierarchy. Such strata are also structured in a hierarchy and remain dependent on one another. For example, local chiefs considered to be of autochthonous origin lead the *vanua* people; and each Fijian family (*itokatoka*) has an elder at its head. Such rulers guide and represent their group, notably in official circumstances (e.g. Ravuvu 1983:8). In the past, local priests (*bete*) were important too, since they spoke for the gods of the *vanua*. A number of these individuals may be perceived at the same time as supports and counter-powers to the *turaga*, following series of dual oppositions (e.g. female versus male, local versus foreign, *vanua* versus *turaga*) frequently described in the historiography of Fiji (Hocart 1914, 1915, 1927b; Rochette 2010; Sahlins 1985:xvi).

Interestingly, between 1774 and 1854, it seems it was quite similar on the Western side of the exchanges. Most European and American visitors to the Fijian islands were sailors, employed either by mercantile companies or by the Navy of their homeland. Mack demonstrated that ships were microcosms, with their own diversity and social organization, submitted to specific rules, codes of honour and pyramidal hierarchies (2011:136ff.). Organizational conventions were obvious among military groups. Yet, a form of "loyalty" also existed on trading vessels. It was "inspired not by

patriotism or submission to some established form of naval discipline, but by a common understanding of the role of captaincy” (Mack 2011:148). Put another way, merchant sailors as well as navy officers were bound by common interest. They cooperated within a centralized system, each one at their own level. They were also allies or enemies to other ship-crews, as Fijians were on good or bad terms with their indigenous neighbours. In fact, this social frame was such that, when deprived of the social space of the ship, former sailors castaway in the islands often sought to reproduce the hierarchy they had embraced on board. They worked on cooperative partnerships (Calvert 2003:307). Often, they structured their groups around a designated leader (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:26; Calvert 2003:307-308), or affiliated themselves to a pre-existing one, sometimes Fijian.

Missionary reports and accounts suggest similar patterns among religious factions. Ministers are, indeed, another kind of Western exchange partner this thesis considers. Indubitably, they too gathered into well-structured units, within which some form of leadership and hierarchy could be observed. They too had allies and enemies among their *alter-egos*, from similar and different churches (chapter 5).

The above-observed symmetry in the organisation of most groups of Fijian and Western partners suggests comparable patterns in the *within* transactions of each side. Following Sahlins’ argument, these inner exchanges may globally be described as centralized. It induces two things. First, it puts forward that “a system of reciprocities” could be found within each group. Secondly, it implies a regime of moral obligations toward the leader of each group, and from him *vis-à-vis* his people (Sahlins 1972:199-200; 205-206).

Ship leaders, assisted by seconds-in-command and supercargoes, were responsible for the fate of their vessel as well as for her crew and cargo. They had to account for it in front of their peers. That concentration of responsibility entailed a centralization of wealth. Sea-captains had to provide for their men, while they also needed to think of the big picture. Similarly, in Fiji a chief is still firstly expected to be *dauveimaroroi* and *dauveitaqomaki* (protector and defender) (Ravuvu 1983:103-104). Thus, moral virtues, including generosity, were thought to be the attributes of high-ranking and wealthy individuals on both sides of Fiji-West exchanges. According to Sahlins, this moral dimension is essential to centralized systems for it smoothes and renders efficient their constitutive asymmetry (1972:199, 204-215).



Now, the concern of this thesis is not *within* interactions but *between* ones. Yet, centralized movements being “systems of reciprocities,” the detailed examination of *vice-versa* transactions within each side may appear highly informative. One question this thesis raises is that of possible matches between cross-cultural and traditional forms of reciprocities. Among these forms of reciprocities, Sahlins distinguished three types. These are defined by the “expectation of returns” they imply. Such an expectation, Sahlins considered, is relevant to “the spirit of the exchange.” It “swings from disinterested concern for the other party through mutuality to self-interest” (Sahlins 1972:192-193). “Generalized reciprocity [is] the solidarity extreme,” “balanced reciprocity, the midpoint” and “negative reciprocity, the unsociable extreme” (*Ibid.*:193-195).

“‘Generalized reciprocity’ refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned.” They embrace what Malinowski named “pure gift,” variously described in ethnographic studies. By definition, the obligation to reciprocate is quite vague: “receiving goods lays on a diffuse obligation to reciprocate when necessary to the donor and/or possible for the recipient.” (*Ibid.*:193-194)

In contrast, “‘balanced reciprocity’ refers to direct exchange. In precise balance, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent to the thing received, and is without delay.” It is “ethnographically attested in certain marital transactions... friendship compacts... and peace agreements.” At any rate, it implies “stipulate returns” and parties who “confront each other as distinct economic and social interests.” (*Ibid.*:194-195)

Finally, “‘negative reciprocity’ is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity...”. It is the “most impersonal sort of exchange... The participants confront each other as opposed interests, each looking to maximize utility at the other’s expense.” (*Ibid.*:195).

The following chapters will demonstrate that Fiji-West early transactions consisted of a mixture of these three kinds, also found within each camp. For instance, the Fijian practice of *kerekere*, described by Sahlins (1962:203-214) and historically attested (see Sahlins 1993), can be perceived as a form of “generalized reciprocity.” Ceremonial prestations during *solevu*, in contrast, can be defined as acts of “balanced reciprocity.” War loot and pillage would be typical examples of “negative reciprocity.”

Sahlins explained that the form of reciprocity depends on the social relations of the protagonists in a given instance. These social relations may correspond to their familial-, rank-, generational- or wealth-distance (1972:196-197, 209ff.). Sahlins suggested that ego's exchange partners should schematically be divided in relatives and strangers (*Ibid.*:197). In the first category, kin-relations are dependant on collective rules formulated by the community. These include the system of moral obligations evoked previously. Relations of relatives usually develop as concentric circles, following residential sectors or genealogical patterns (*Ibid.*: 197-199). In this scheme, strangers are outsiders *per se*. With them, the reciprocity is likely to be negative (*Ibid.*:199, fig.5.1). Yet, the previous section has demonstrated that even the closest relative is *alter* in exchange circumstances. Furthermore, Sahlins nuanced his discourse by stating that "no moral system is exclusively absolute (especially in wartime)" (*Ibid.*:199). More importantly, aside from the tripartite scheme that would contextualize every transaction, and that is social, moral and economic (*Ibid.*:200), Sahlins introduced a notion of emotional distance. Thus, even though "trade-partnerships often developed along lines of classificatory or affinal kinship," extended partnerships or even "trade-friendships" may involve outsiders (*Ibid.*:201-202). Eventually, a distant affine might be less close to ego than a foreign friend; and they may have a less altruistic relation than "strangers." Sahlins summarized: "real situations are complicated" (*Ibid.*:213).

Moreover, Sahlins explained that some kinds of exchanged goods themselves provide exceptions to general schemes. Thus, he wrote: "Food has too much social value — ultimately because it has too much use value — to have exchange value" (1972:218). However, Sahlins further explained: "Food does not move against money or other stuff within the community or tribe, yet it may be so exchanged out outside these social contexts..." (*Ibid.*:219). This is of particular interest here, because food-supplies were a key trade in Fiji-West early relations. For survival, sailors and missionaries were dependant on the resources they could find in the islands. In parallel, it has been pointed out by Hooper (2013:138-139, 153) that food usually moves against valuables (*iyau*) in Fiji-Fiji ceremonial transactions, including historical ones. Again, this raises the question of similarities and differences between endogenous and exogenous exchange relations. What preceded demonstrated they are comparable. The following chapters will look for transferable patterns. Among those, the contracting dimension of the exchanges and the

possible correspondences between friendship, kinship and other forms of partnership will be discussed.

In the previous section, *between* transactions were defined as competitive exchanges of sacrifices, during which the value of people and things are re-assessed with reference to a number of collective schemes. Here, Fiji-West early exchanges have been described as reciprocal *between* transactions, yet related to the asymmetries and hierarchies of each group, themselves symmetrically observable. In light of these observations, this thesis suggests that Fiji-West interactions consisted in transactions between hierarchies of exchange partners, parallel to one another, rather than between isolated individuals.

The next chapters will show that most *recorded* interactions between Fijians and Euro-Americans until 1854 involved *high-ranking male individuals*, i.e. a narrow minority among the mass of the potential transactors. Naturally, this impacted on the corpus of exchanged items and exchange circumstances here considered. Furthermore, many of the following examples relate official encounters rather than confidential or informal transactions, which were no doubt numerous. Frequently, such encounters consisted in public events, some of which were demonstrative “tournaments of values” that involved whole groups via the mediation of their leader(s). This self-induced selection must be explained and nuanced.

In Fijian as in European history, there has been a tendency to mostly recall the names of “kings” and other high-ranking male actors, despite the actual significance of “secondary” characters such as Fijian “queens” and other non-titled people. Higher ranking personages logically tended to access greater precious riches — *iyau* in Fijian. Each interaction, however, must have created its own hierarchy, since the protagonists confronted their own value along with that of the exchanged items. It is probable that in each case, the highest ranking individuals present received the most and the best. Accordingly, if the highest in rank one day was a mere lieutenant or a “small” chief, it probably worked in a similar way, only at another level. If we extrapolate, exchanges may be considered as opportunities to climb hierarchical steps.

Also, partly due to the above-described hierarchies and interdependences, “the social life” of exchanged things rarely stopped with the cross-cultural exchange (Appadurai 1986). Most articles continued circulating within each group, up or down the hierarchy according to their relative value and to the social position of their

consecutive keepers. Thus, items in European hands circulated between sailors, intellectuals and Western authorities. It is in this way that, once in Europe or in the United States, some eventually reached museums.<sup>25</sup>

Things in Fijian hands also transited via the allies, and sometimes the enemies, of the initial exchange partner(s). Such circulations were subject to permanent hierarchies as well as circumstantial power struggles. For example, a few Western things, more or less Fijianized, became status symbols in historical Fiji. Cakobau's powder horn, now on permanent loan at the Fiji Museum (FM n°81.329), is a case in point. This artefact of European origin was ornamented with fine ivory inlays. Such inlays, in the Tongan fashion, were the assigned attributes of chiefly artefacts (see frontispiece of *Fijian Heritage*, February 1980).

## Thoughts about translations: historical and cultural relativism

Methodologically speaking, this thesis is interdisciplinary. Its cross-cultural and historical investigations allude to several fields from which methods and objectives have been borrowed. History, anthropology, art history and even archaeology have been mentioned, along with philosophy and visual anthropology. Now, comparisons with linguistics may prove useful, to move from theoretical forms to historical case studies.

### Linguistic-like translations

In linguistics a translation consists in *rendering an idea in another language* and, by extension, *in the conversion of something from one medium into another* (Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd edition, 2010). A few authors, including Mounin (1963), Keesing (1985) and Strang (2009), linked linguistic and cultural translations. They emphasized a number of shared issues between them. As already underlined with reference to Forge, such difficulties comprise the comprehension of a whole system of significances by a foreign observer, who is often a foreign speaker too. Even when it can be identified, the rendering of such a system into another language — in our case academic English — may be problematic.

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<sup>25</sup> Others were lost. Some remained in private hands, sometime transiting via the art market, like the Vincendon-Dumoulin collection, gathered by the cartographer of the *Astrolabe*, 1837-40 (Gros, Delettrez and Voutier 2003).

As an English teacher of mine used to say, a translation is always a matter of interpretation and choices, and so are histories, “present acts of conception and representations” (Douglas 1999:65). Willingly or not, foreign observers have acted as “professional dealers in exotica” (Keesing 1985:201). Whatever their intentions — and those varied a lot whether they were nineteenth-century missionaries or twenty-first-century scientists — they chose to emphasize some cultural differences between themselves and those observed. Furthermore, in the process of translating, witnesses usually remain conditioned by their own cultural background. These two faults entailed a number of mistranslations and over-interpretations throughout history, especially obvious when it comes to what Keesing called “conventional metaphors” (*Ibid.*).

In his demonstration, Keesing used the examples of *mana* and *tabu*. According to him, recurrent mistakes about them stemmed from inappropriate shifts between several grammatical forms. For instance, *mana* seems to have initially been a stative and intransitive verb, though it sometimes developed as an active verbal form or as an abstract noun. Still, it has frequently been used by foreigners as a common noun, associated with a tangible reality (Keesing 1985:203). In Fiji today, while *mana* can be translated as “to be efficacious” and by extension related to idea of “success,” “good fortune” and even personal “prestige” (Gatty 2009:152), it hardly ever refers to a supernatural *substance* like the one Mauss defined (2004:101-114). Similarly, *tabu* originally meant “off-limits” or “marked” and was inherently relative (Keesing 1985:204-205). In Fiji, however, the synonymy between *tabu*, “sacred” and even “holy” has become a linguistic reality (Gatty 2009:239; Capell 1941:246-247); but this evolution should be related to Western influences (Keesing 1985:205).

These examples underline a double difficulty, first in rendering Fijian significances into English, secondly in avoiding schematic transfers of Western paradigms onto the Fijian system. This is further complicated, in this thesis, because a form of historical relativism must overlap a cultural one. Indeed, notions such as “sacred” and “holy,” apparently absent from Fijian early preoccupations, were present early in foreign descriptions. For instance, in 1838, a French navy officer already used the word “*tabou*” (taboo) as an alternative for “*sacrée*” (sacred), when mentioning a stone-enclosure at Bau (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, IV:387).

Put another way, the translation issues to be addressed in this thesis are not only modern ones. They also present difficulties with historical sources. These investigations

are cross-cultural in essence, and so is their object (Fiji-West transactions) and the research material on which they rely (i.e. museum collections and, subsidiary, voyagers' accounts, sea-journals, missionary narratives, etc.). In order to avoid misinterpretations, it seems essential to exert a constructive form of scepticism (Keesing 1985:214) and to opt as much as possible for "decolonized methodologies" (Routledge 1985:13-39).

Tuhiwai Smith has suggested that indigenous people would make the most efficient and legitimate researchers in modern Pacific studies. Autochthonous research could provide alternatives to current and past mainstream practices, moulded in Western paradigms (1999:55-56). Unfortunately, I am not a Fijian. This given, I am not a nineteenth-century sailor either, nor a missionary. The translation issues this thesis seeks to tackle are therefore concerned with both sides of Fiji-West exchanges, quite symmetrically. And it is one of its goals to try to overcome them methodologically.

As a result, this study chooses to render both Western and Fijian paradigms as much as possible. This implies clear definitions of problematic terms, with reference to their limits in this piece of work, as well as an actual absence of translation where this is manageable. Periphrases and juxtapositions will be frequent. The former will notably appear in footnotes and inserted clauses, the latter between brackets, as indicative translations for key words. In addition, a glossary of Fijian words will be provided at the end of this volume.

This method, it is hoped, will help clarify the use of a few English words such as "chief," "king" and their derivatives (e.g. chieftdom, kingdom, chiefhood, kingship, etc.). These remain inaccurate translations of Fijian titles and ranks. In historical as in modern Fiji, the distinction between "chief" and "king" did not seem to make sense. Today, from my knowledge at least, a Fijian speaker would never translate a Fijian rank by "king" or "queen." He or she would rather use the word "chief," with a notable exception for Queen Elizabeth II of England. Historically however, the structural hierarchies we already mentioned obliged the foreign visitors to introduce some distinctions among Fijian chiefly ranks. In doing this, they referred to Western ranking systems. For instance, we have seen that Wilkes considered Yavala, Tui Cakau, as the "king" of Somosomo (Wilkes 1845, III:160).

In general, it became acknowledged that paramount leaders who could be designated by the titles *Tui* or *Rokotui*, attached to a place name, would be regarded as the kings of such a place and its dependences (e.g. Capell 1941:406). Subsequently, the

“kingdoms” of such “kings” were frequently called *matanitu* (e.g. Capell 1941:406; Routledge 1985; Thomas 1986). Such a translation seems, however, quite recent (Gatty 2009:160). In a broader way, somebody who could be designated as Tui or Rokotui of one place is before all a *turaga*, i.e. a distinguished individual and by extension a chief. Historically, the word *turaga* was used for local “chiefs” (Capell 1941:285 & 363) as well as for foreign gentlemen and masters (Capell 1941:285; Gatty 2009:272). Other titles have been discussed in some detail by Hooper (1996).

In order to avoid the complex difficulties involved in translating Fijian titles, this thesis will use Fijian terms wherever possible. When a person of chiefly status is referred to in English, the word “chief” will be preferred, sometimes further qualified by an adjective (e.g. paramount chief). However, to avoid repetitions and heavy periphrases, the word “king” shall be used occasionally as an alternative for “chief” and *turaga*. In such a case, it will not necessarily imply someone extremely high in rank.

This exemplifies the issues occasioned by translations of Fijian into English. The other way round must not be ignored either. Historical as well as modern observers, tied up with particular obsessions and intents, frequently tried to translate their own concerns and vocabulary into Fijian. For example we already discussed the word *tabu*. We have also seen how the focus of this thesis, on exchange relations, embraced a range of concepts, theories and notions, hardly translatable (e.g. “reciprocity,” “value,” “sacrificial economy”). These are associated with specific meanings, which vary according to disciplines and authors. As suggested for Fijian paradigms, it would therefore seem preferable to avoid translation when possible. Yet, one may note that some Fijian words related to exchange circumstances or exchanged things prove helpful in clarifying conceptual hindrances — see Thomas’ discussion on *iyau* (1991:67-68).

## Methodological decisions

As explained in the introduction, what we now call “Fiji” is a construction of history. This denomination, of Tongan origin, results from a combination of geographical, cultural, historical and political factors (e.g. Routledge 1985: esp.13-39; Derrick 1957; Clunie 2003a:iii). Progressively, the archipelago became known as a consistent entity. In 1874, it was attributed official boundaries. These contrasted with previously-observed links and divisions, notably with Tonga and between several parts of the group itself. However, they made sense in terms of geo-politics at the time, and they have been

broadly acknowledged since. It is that specific geo-political space that is under consideration here. From now on the word “Fiji” — as well as “Tonga,” “Samoa,” etc. — will be employed without inverted commas to designate the archipelago as it is currently delineated, with the exception of Rotuma that is not relevant to the current discussion.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the Fiji in question will assume an inherent diversity with permeable frontiers.

The adjective “Fijian” will qualify anything related to the above mentioned space, in spite of possible anachronisms. The noun “Fijian” will refer to the indigenous inhabitants of the so-called archipelago and to the standardized language they speak, now known as *Standard Fijian*. Today, this idiom is one of the three official languages of Fiji, along with English and Hindi. Historically, it stemmed from Bauan; but it was progressively standardized and enriched via foreign mediations (Derrick 1957:71-72; Schütz 1979:7-16; Geraghty 2008:8-10; Gatty 2009:3-4). This choice obscures the linguistic diversity of the archipelago (see Geraghty 1983); and it is mostly anachronistic. However, it has the advantage of providing clear references, easily checkable within the few existing Fijian-English dictionaries (e.g. Gatty 2009; Capell 1941; Hazlewood 1890).

## Outline

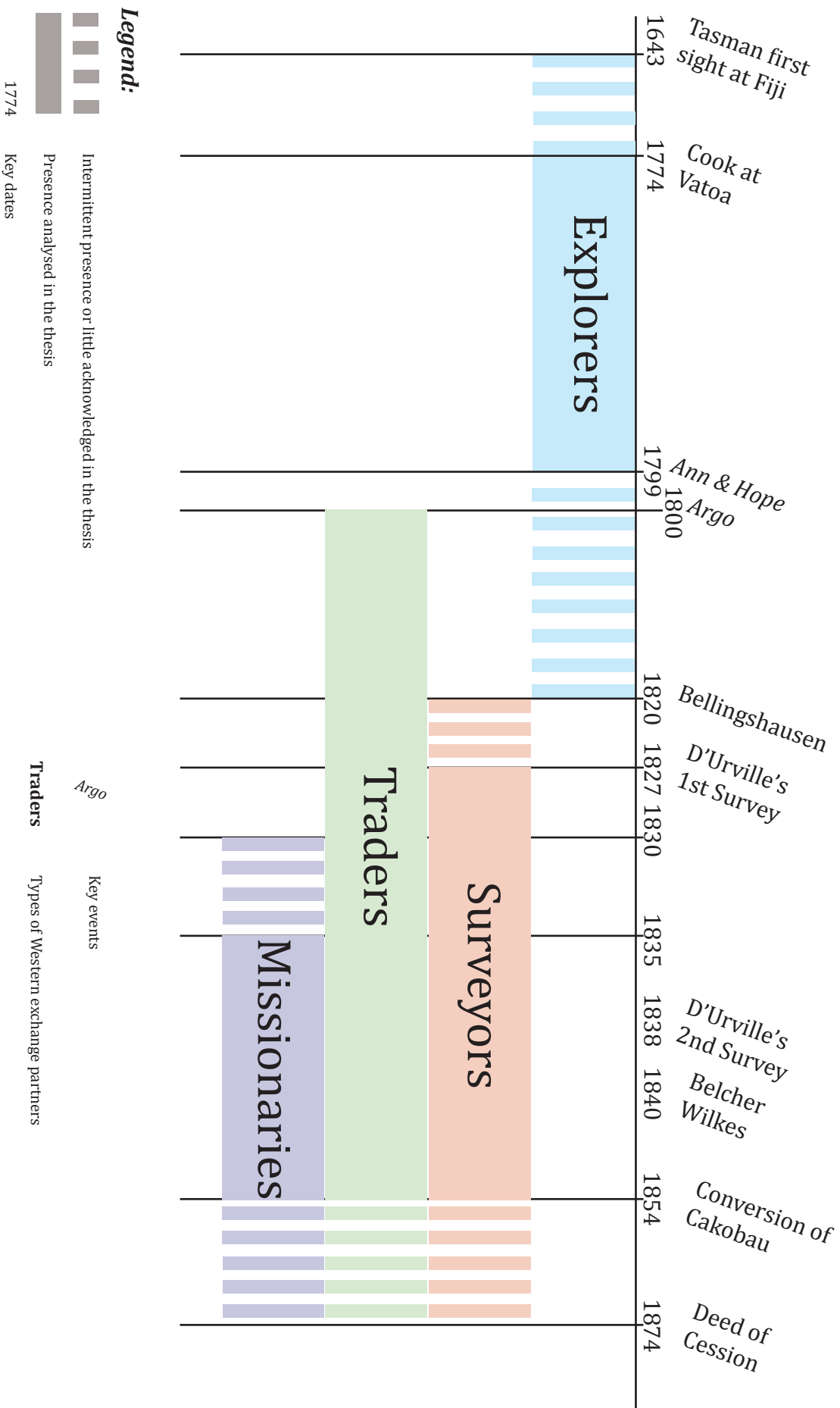
The best way, it seems, to render all the above parameters is to follow the historical progression of Fiji-West encounters along the period of study (1774-1854). The chronological sequence involves several kinds of Western exchange partners, with overlaps. Each of the next chapters will focus on one of them, according to their order of appearance in Fiji. Eighteenth-century explorers from Europe came first (chapter 2), followed by Euro-American traders and beachcombers from the beginning of the nineteenth century (chapter 3). Then, European and American voyagers — also referred to as surveyors — arrived (chapter 4), and eventually missionaries from the 1830s (chapter 5). In terms of geography, emphasis will always be on places where the interactions occurred, in Fiji or Tonga. What happened in Europe or America will only be mentioned for contextualization, or with respect to the current location of the objects.

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<sup>26</sup> Rotuma was attached to Fiji in 1881, after its annexation by the British Crown. In 1970, it became a part of the independent Republic. Yet, during the period under consideration (1774-1854) it was connected to Fiji in the same way as Tongatapu or other islands.



# 1.1— Timeline



## Chapter 2

### Explorers (1643-1799)

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This chapter focuses on the first known interactions between Fijians and Europeans. Some voyages here considered had commercial aims. Yet, they too can be regarded as exploratory journeys since much of the South Pacific remained uncharted until the end of eighteenth century. The sailors who undertook such expeditions were unfamiliar with the area. By definition, they are called *explorers* here. A large part of their enterprise consisted in locating islands — i.e. in recording imprecise positions on quite inexact charts (Henderson 1933:24-25). Few journeys involved actual contacts with Fiji, Fijians or Fijian artefacts. However, these first encounters shaped the early perception of Fiji and the Fijians in Europe, and *vice versa*. Most artefacts made in Fiji we know from the eighteenth century were acquired in Tonga. Among them, mostly weapons seem to have survived. Why in Tonga? Why weapons? What else would have been traded? In exchange for what? With reference to the objects we know, this chapter calls specific attention to the Western Polynesian setting of these interactions. Additionally, it explores their empirical and intellectual background.

For clarity reasons, this chapter has been divided in two parts. The first section exposes the facts we know about these early encounters, chronologically, including the possible existence of museum collections. The second part seeks to highlight the crucial patterns of these first interactions.

### Encountering Fiji

#### Tasman (1643)

Before the known acquisition of any Fijian artefact, the Dutch captain Abel Janszoon Tasman noticed unrecorded islands to the north-west of Tonga. Like many after him, he sailed west from Tonga (Nomuka). There, he apparently had not met any Fijian or heard anything about Fiji. Yet, on his way to the East Indies, he came across a few isles. He spotted a first one on the 5th February 1643. On the 6th he sailed past several others. He named them *Prins Wyllems Eylanden* (Prince William's Islands) and had a map drawn.

Viewed retrospectively, his chart provided Europe with the first material proof of Fiji's existence; and it credited Tasman as its official "discoverer."<sup>1</sup>

Tasman's *Prins Wyllems Eylanden* correspond to the north-eastern part of the archipelago as it is currently delimited (e.g. Nukubasaga, Nukubalati, Nukusemanu and surrounding reefs). The Dutch probably also spotted Cikobia and Vanualevu. The latter is the second biggest island of the archipelago, but Tasman could not comprehend its dimensions (Henderson 1933:50-61).

The Dutch East Indies Company had sent the *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen* (Tasman's vessels) to the Pacific, in search of potential wealth. The Council of Batavia had encouraged Tasman to make as many contacts as possible with the islanders in order to ascertain the presence of trading riches. In spite of these directives, Tasman did not land or meet anyone that day. With regret, in the absence of anchorage, he pursued his north-west route, missing a whole archipelago to the South (Sharp 1968:172-179).

### Cook (Vatoa, 1774)

The first recorded direct contact with Fijians took place during Cook's second voyage, over one hundred and thirty years after Tasman's passage in the area. Like the Dutchman, Cook sailed from Nomuka. On the 2nd July 1774, while they aimed for the Great Cyclades,<sup>2</sup> the *Resolution* and *Adventure* came near a small island. Because of numerous turtles they saw in the lagoon, it was named "Turtle Island." Today, it is known as Vatoa. This name, according to Henderson, could be related to Cook's visit and to four (*va*) fowls (*toa*) he would have left there in 1774. Yet, Cook's accounts did not mention any chickens.<sup>3</sup> Henderson therefore attributed that explanation, which he was given by Vatoa's inhabitants, to Cook's fame and to the prestige of being associated with him (1933:108). It seems it was a brief but historically valued encounter.

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<sup>1</sup> Most islands were already inhabited when European sailors first reached them. Therefore, the Austronesian-speaking people, who first populated the area, were their true "discoverers." However, this probably never occurred to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars. That is why I put the word *discovery*, and its declinations, between quotation marks. When I used them, I consider it a reminiscence of the romantic approach to European exploration of the Pacific of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

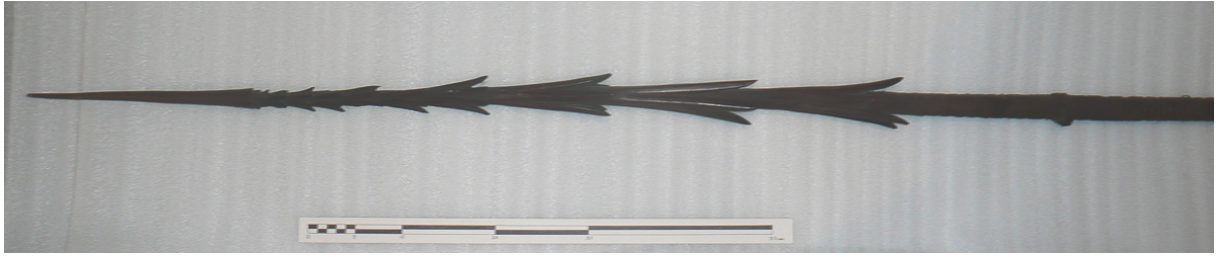
<sup>2</sup> Bougainville named *Grandes Cyclades* (Great Cyclades) the islands he explored in 1768. They included Espiritu Santo and other lying to its east. Cook called the whole group New Hebrides in 1774. The archipelago kept the latter name until its independence in 1980, to become Vanuatu.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dillon, on the other hand, is supposed to have left some pigs, fowls and Muscovy ducks on the island in 1826 (Bays 1831:61n.)

Despite an attempt, there was no direct contact with the islanders on the 3rd July 1774. A few objects were involved though. Assuming they were at an island no European had seen before (G. Forster 2000:421), Cook and his crew seemed eager to learn more about it. Unfortunately, the only pass in Vatoa's reef was not deep enough for the *Resolution* and *Adventure* and no anchorage could be found. When the boat's master landed, the islanders fled into the woods. The scout left a few items on the shore and returned to the ships.

“At 11 o’Clock we reached the NW or Lee side of the isle at a place where Anchorage seem’d probable, but in order to be certain we brought-to hoisted out a boat and sent the Master to sound. At this time 4 or 5 people appeared on the reef which stretch off from the isle and about three time that number on the Shore, as the Boat advanced those on the reef retired to the Woods. At Noon the Boat return’d when the Master informed me that there was no soundings without the reef, through which was a Channel of no more than Six feet water, entering by this Channel he pull’d in for the Shore thinking to speak with the people not more than 20 in number who were Arm’d with Clubs and Spears, but the moment he set his foot on the Shore they retired, he left ashore some Medals, Nails and a Knife which they undoubtedly would get as some of them some time after appeared again on the Shore near the place.” (Beaglehole 1961:452)

The number of islanders seen varies from one account to another — from about fifteen to thirty — but both Cook's and G. Forster's accounts confirm that a few individuals were armed. Sadly, no detail was provided about their weapons, apart from their categories — i.e. clubs and spears. It is possible however that some of the spears observed at Vatoa in July 1774 resembled the item now at the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM), Oxford, illustrated by Kaeppler in the Tongan section of her book (1978a:237-238, fig.504). Its barbs and bindings are distinctive of Fijian *gadregadre* spears, illustrated by Clunie (2003b:160, fig.126). According to Kaeppler, evidence allows us to attribute this specimen to the Forster collection, and therefore to Cook's second voyage. No artefact having been acquired at Vatoa, as far as we know from the accounts available, this spear was likely acquired in Tonga whether in October 1773 or in June 1774 (<http://objects.prm.ox.ac.uk/pages/PRMUID25875.html>, last consulted 15/08/2013). Even though it was probably not considered Fijian at the time of its acquisition, nor since, that spear may be one of the oldest Fijian-made items currently in a museum. The Forster and Cook collections having been widely dispersed throughout Europe, it is possible that others specimens of Fijian early weaponry and other crafts could be found in European museums (Kaeppler 2009:58). Unfortunately, that investigation could not be conducted during this research.



## 2.1— PRM, 1886.1.1508

In any event, the above specimen allows us to envisage the acquisition of artefacts of Fijian manufacture as early as 1773 in Tonga.

### Cook (Tongatapu, 1777)

Cook's second encounter with Fijians happened in the middle of 1777, while the crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* stopped at Tongatapu for provisions (28th April to mid-July). A number of references to Fiji in Cook's account (1784) suggest that Fijian and British travellers met more than once, becoming progressively acquainted with each other during their shared time on Tongatapu. They also show that Cook and his men learnt a lot about Fiji from Tongan islanders. Thus, Cook wrote:

"The most considerable islands in this neighbourhood that we now heard of (and we heard a great deal about them), are Hamoa, Vavaoo, and Feejee. Each of these was represented to us as larger than Tongataboo." (Cook 1784, I:371)

A few pages later, he provided more details:

"Feejee, as we were told, lies three days' sail from Tongataboo, in the direction of northwest by west. It was described to us as a high, but very fruitful island; abounding with hogs, dogs, fowls, and all the kinds of fruit and roots that are found in any of the others; and as much larger than Tongataboo; to the dominion of which, as was represented to us, it is not subject as the other islands of this archipelago are. On the contrary, Feejee and Tongataboo frequently make war upon each other. And it appeared, from several circumstances, that the inhabitants of the latter are much afraid of this enemy. They used to express their sense of their own inferiority to the Feejee men, by bending the body forward, and covering the face with their hands. And it is no wonder that they should be under this dread; for those of Feejee are formidable on account of the dexterity with which they use their bows and slings; but much more so, on account of the savage practice to which they are addicted, like those of New Zealand, of eating their enemies whom they kill in battle. We were satisfied that this was not a misrepresentation. For we met with several Feejee people at Tongataboo, and, on inquiring of them, they did not deny the charge.

"Now that I am again led to speak of cannibals, let me ask those who maintain that the want of food first brings men to feed on human flesh, what is it that induced the Feejee people to keep it up in the midst of plenty? This practice is detested very much by

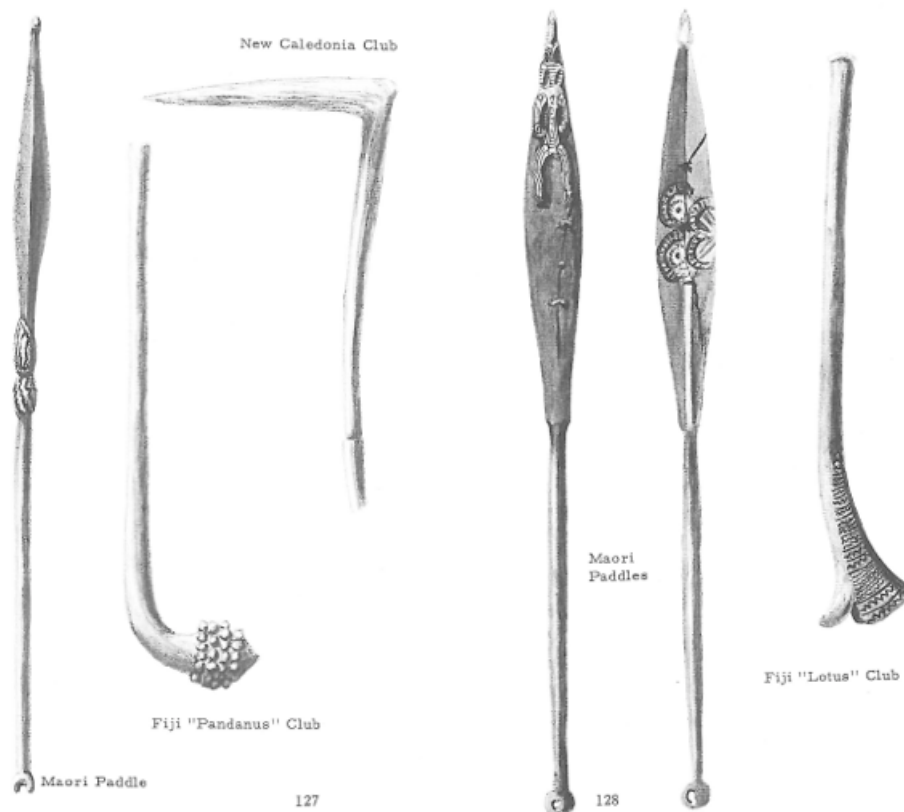
those of Tongataboo, who cultivate the friendship of their savage neighbours of Feejee, apparently out of fear; though they sometimes venture to skirmish with them on their own ground; and carry off red feathers as their booty, which are in great plenty there, and, as has been frequently mentioned, are in great estimation amongst our Friendly Islanders. When the two islands are at peace, the intercourse between them seems to be pretty frequent; though they have, doubtless, been but lately known to each other; or we may suppose that Tongataboo and its adjoining islands would have been supplied, before this, with a breed of dogs which abound at Feejee, and had not been introduced at Tongataboo so late as 1773, when I first visited it. The natives of Feejee, whom we met with here, were of a colour that was a full shade darker than that of the inhabitants of the Friendly Islands in general. One of them had his left ear slit, and the lobe was so distended, that it almost reached his shoulder; which singularity I had met with at other islands of the South Sea during my second voyage. It appeared to me that the Feejee men, whom we now saw, were much respected here; not only, perhaps, from the power and cruel manner of their nation's going to war, but also from their ingenuity. For they seem to excel the inhabitants of Tongataboo in that respect, if we might judge from several specimens of their skill in workmanship which we saw; such as clubs and spears, which were carved in a very masterly manner; cloth beautifully chequered; variegated mats; earthen pots, and some other articles; all which had a cast of superiority in the execution." (Cook 1784, I:374-375)

The above extract sheds light on the nature and extent of Fiji-Tonga connections in 1777. Also, it informs us about an early Tongan influence over the European perception of Fiji. Both these aspects will be examined in the second part of this chapter.

The last sentence in the above passage enumerates a number of Fijians artefacts and crafts in circulation in Tonga — and possibly beyond — in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Cook's reputation as a thorough collector leaves little doubt that some of these "specimens" must have been acquired. Yet, such acquisitions in Tonga, along with an erratic history of Cook's objects in Europe (Kaeppeler 2011; Kaeppeler 1978a), render identifications difficult. Many objects must have been labelled as Tongan. Others might have been lost. Also, the above-listed crafts are evocative of the Fijian objects Europeans collected the most since the late eighteenth century (i.e. weaponry, *masi* or barkcloth and pottery). These are consequently common in museums. As a result, among the collections comprising Cook objects, the identification of any artefact from Cook's voyages as Fijian with a sufficient level of certainty is difficult; and so is the attempt to link any Fijian artefact with Cook's expeditions for sure. On the other hand, a number of "Cook objects" can be regarded as either Fijian or Tongan.

By chance, a few paintings exist, representing weapons and other artefacts related to Cook's expeditions. Sarah Stone painted these watercolours at the Leverian Museum (London) in 1783, after she had been commissioned by Sir Ashton Lever, the Museum's owner and well-known collector of Cook's artefacts (Stone 1968:2). The date,

1783, and the Leverian provenance leave little doubt about the origin of the depicted artefacts. As far as we know today, no contacts happened before 1773 involving the possible acquisition of Fijian artefacts. Furthermore, between 1773 and 1783 most artefacts with a Tongan provenance present at the Leverian museum, including some possibly Fijian in origin, are likely to be attributed to Cook's expeditions. Among the depicted items, some can be regarded as distinctively Fijian, in comparison with later specimens now in museums, collected in large quantity during the nineteenth century in Fiji and therefore likely to have originated there. Others could be described as either Fijian or Tongan, due to the entanglement of the two cultures.<sup>4</sup>

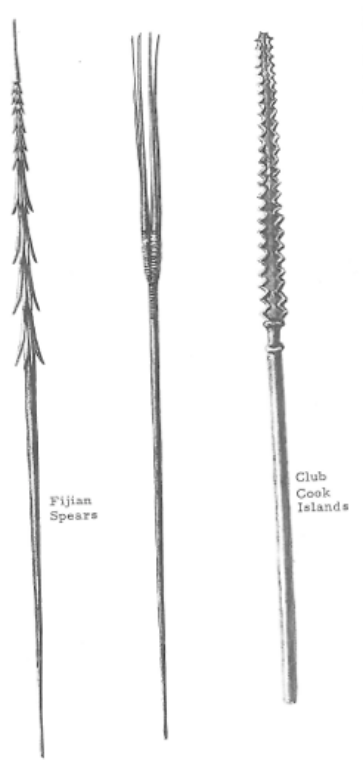


2.2— Stone's plate (1968:127)

2.3— Stone's plate (1968:128)

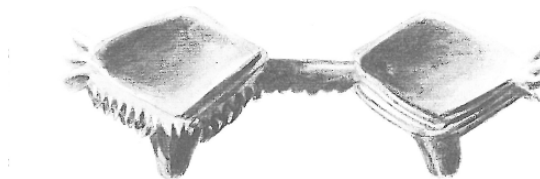
For instance, a few pieces of weaponry in Stone's paintings show features one may consider distinctively Fijian. In particular, Stone represented two clubs (1968:127-128) that could respectively be regarded as an old type of *totokia* (battle-hammer), and as a *gata* or small *cali* club (Clunie 2003b:fig.2-6). Both types are common among early museum collections from Fiji, notably from the first part of the nineteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> For further information about the sketches and the Leverian Museum see Kaeppler 2011



2.4— Stone's plate (1968:134)

The sketchbooks also include a plate with spears, designated as Fijian by R. and M. Force (Stone 1968:134). Indeed, the drawings are consistent with existing types of Fijian spears: a *gadregadre* barbed spear, carved out of a single piece of wood — already evoked with reference to the Forster collection (PRM 1886.1.1508) — and a *saisai* or multi-pronged spear (cf. Clunie 2003b:fig.27-28). The second one has four prongs with sennit bindings (*magimagi*) to hold them. Like the clubs, these spears show no special decoration according to Stone's drawings, while some early museum spears, including the one from the Forster's collection, are adorned with *magimagi* and other materials. This apparent absence of ornamentation will be discussed later in this chapter.

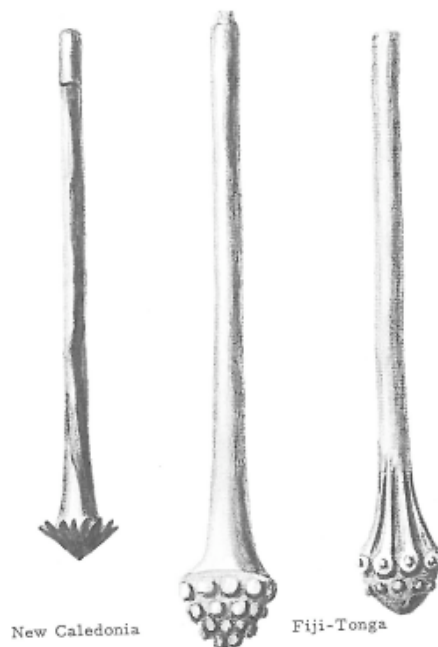


2.5— Stone's plate (1968:81)



Other sketches by Stone show artefacts with a possibly Fijian or Tongan origin. Among hardly distinguishable objects, Stone's sketchbooks illustrate a few *kava* bowls (Stone 1968:81 & 125) and clubs (*Ibid.*:114, 126 & 129). For instance, there is a double *kava* bowl, in the shape of *leba* fruits (*Ibid.*:81). Such dishes can be found in nineteenth-century Fijian collections. Cook acquired examples of them in the late eighteenth century in Tonga, such as the *kumete* exhibited in Bonn in 2009 (Kaeppeler 2009:193 fig.272). For comparison, one could mention specimens considered Fijian such as the priest bowl kept at the Museum Victoria (Melbourne) (X32851; <http://museumvictoria.com.au/fiji/index.aspx>, last consulted 19/08/2013), whose conical stand is typical of Fijian nineteenth-century priest bowls for *burau* rituals. The shape of the linked containers is reminiscent of the above Tongan bowl. The British Museum (BM) also has one specimen, considered Fijian, connected with the London Missionary Society (BM Oc,LMS.68).

Wooden Clubs



2.6— Stone's plate (1968:126)

To some clubs from Stone's paintings a similar argument can be applied (1968:114, 126 & 129). Historical specimens existed in Fiji and Tonga, but their presence in the Cook collections may suggest a Tongan origin. Examples of this are long heavy clubs with a rounded conical head, covered with many knobs in medium relief (Stone 1968:126). These are called *bulibuli* in Fijian. In 2009, Kaeppler mentioned them as "another category of clubs collected during Cook's voyage," suggesting that she found more than one in her search for Cook's artefacts (2009:207 fig.346). Although these are quite rare among Fijian collections, some specimens of later acquisition appear quite "fijianized" with, for example, *tavatava* carved patterns (e.g. AM n°3842, and Clunie 2003b:fig.17f).



2.7— AM, n°3842

On the same plate as the above example (Stone 1968:126), on its right, Stone depicted another club with a probable Tongan origin, even though it was sometimes found in Fiji. Again, clubs like this one were exceptional in Fiji, to the extent that Clunie could not name them in Fijian (2003b:fig.16e-f). Neither could he name the last type that will be mentioned here, represented on another plate (Stone 1968:114). This one consists in a thick club with a rounded conical or triangular head. It is among the rarest and oldest clubs found in early collections from Western Polynesia, including Fiji. Most specimens known have been associate with Tonga and eighteenth-century voyages of exploration. For example, the Auckland Museum (AM) holds a specimen (n°31837) that was formerly part of Oldman's collection. Others are flatter with larger blades, some neatly carved (see Stone 1968:114; Clunie 2003b:fig.8).



2.8— AM, 31837



2.9— Stone's plate (1968:114)

One distinguishing pattern that could be evoked to differentiate Fijian from Tongan and Samoan clubs is the butt form. Indeed, from observation of a number of early museum items one could notice that Tongan clubs usually have a lug or a rough end. Fijian ones, in contrast, have a plain flat bottom or a bulbous ridge. Frequently, a triangular lug may be observed at the base of Samoan clubs. Following these remarks, the central club on Stone's above plate (1968:126) could be regarded as rather Tongan — or Samoan — than Fijian, because of the lug depicted at its base. The "paddle club" on the other hand (Stone 1968:114), could be regarded as possibly Fijian, due to its bulbous bottom. Another distinguishing feature that could be mentioned here is the carving technique of the decoration, where it exists. In his systematic study of early Tongan clubs, Mills distinguished two types of carved designs, in *graffito* or *relievo* relief (Mills 2007:304-305). In 2008, he stated:

"... early (i.e. 1770s) Tongan clubs were plain or decorated at the head end only with plain handles; their decoration was hatched and cross-hatched and what art-historians call *graffito* (that is, positive) while Fijian clubs seem mostly to have been engraved at the handle end and their decoration was predominantly *relievo* zigzag motifs." (personal communication, 16th August 2008)

This given, although quite accurate if we may judge by the matching sketches and objects Kaeppler's identified (2011), Stone's watercolours cannot be regarded as photographic records. Furthermore, a possible chronological evolution of the above-listed features could be evoked. Therefore, no definitive conclusion can be formulated regarding the provenance of the artefacts painted in 1783 at the Leverian Museum.

Similarly, about other Fijian artefacts possibly acquired by Cook in Tonga in 1777, only hypotheses can be expressed. These are mostly based on Kaeppler's work who, in recent books and exhibition (2011, 2009), gathered many objects from Cook's voyages, thirty years after *Artificial Curiosities* (1978a). According to the catalogues, no exhibits were definitely considered Fijian, even though some might have been the clubs and spears Cook mentioned (see for example Kaeppler 1978a:238-39, fig.515-16). In 2009, a skirt of vegetal fibres was noted as "Fiji?" (Kaeppler 2009:202, fig.318), but this is a common type, broadly distributed in Oceania. It could also be Micronesian for example (Krämer 1995:18, fig.7).



2.10— Göttingen University, OZ 577 (Kaeppler 2009:202)

Among the Tongan objects exhibited at Bonn, one piece of barkcloth caught the attention of many visitors (Kaeppler 2009:202, fig.322; personal communication). This piece of *gatu* (Tongan barkcloth) matches Cook's description for "cloths beautifully chequered" (1784, I:375) and might remind us of later specimens of *gatu* (in the Fijian way) found in the Wilkes collection (1840) (e.g. NMNH E3271).



2.11— NMNH, E3271

If this piece was Fijian, it could be the earliest specimen of Fijian barkcloth (*masi*) known, but this hypothesis needs further investigation. As Kaeppler explained, not only Tongan women who married into Fiji travelled with their belongings, but they also brought designs with them (personal communication). *Masi* from eastern Fiji, similar to the above example, are in fact well-known for combining Fijian and Tongan patterns. Also, high ranking marriage ceremonies entailed extensive exchanges of Fijian and Tongan goods, including barkcloths. In addition, Cook suggested that Fijians brought *masi* to Tonga, but it is possible that some of the barkcloths he and his crew saw in Fijian hands were in fact Tongan. Henceforth, the Göttingen piece might well be Tongan. In that case, however, it shows fascinating connections between Fijian and Tongan styles.

The previous examples illustrated that information and objects gathered outside Fiji are crucial for further analysis and comparisons. In the same way, things that Europeans gave away in Tonga cannot be ignored. In 1777, on Tongatapu, Cook wrote:

"We found by our experience, that the best articles for traffic, at these islands, are iron tools in general. Axes and hatchets; nails, from the largest spike down to ten penny ones; rasps, files, and knives, are much sought after. Red cloth, and linen, both white and coloured; looking-glasses and beads, are also in estimation; but of the latter, those that are blue are preferred to all others; and white ones are thought the least valuable. A string of large blue beads would, at any time, purchase a hog. But it must be observed, that such articles as are merely ornaments, may be highly esteemed at one time, and not so at another. When we first arrived at Annamooka, the people there would hardly take them in exchange even for fruit; but when Feenou came, this great man set the fashion,

and brought them into vogue, till they rose in their value to what I have just mentioned. In return for the favourite commodities which I have enumerated, all the refreshments may be procured that the islands produce.” (Cook 1784, I:365-366)

The above quote enumerates usual trade items in use in Tonga since Tasman’s visits (Geraghty & Tent 2001). All of them can be found in Fiji-related accounts from the nineteenth century as well, and they will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

### Bligh (1789)

Between the 5th and 8th May 1789, following a S.E.-N.W. route from Moce island to the Yasawas, Bligh and his men became the first Europeans to cross the archipelago, willingly if we believe a letter from Bligh to Joseph Banks, in December 1789:

“Even in my distressed situation, I went in search of Fidgee Isld's. & discovered them, or a number of others through which I sailed, and have made a decent survey of them with respect to their situation.” (Letter from Bligh to Banks, 18th December 1789, <http://www.fatefulvoyage.com> last consulted 22/09/2013)

First, they passed Gau and Nairai; then, they made their way between Vitilevu and Vanualevu, acknowledging their dimensions. Luckily, they did not meet any reef or other danger that could not be overcome. The sailing skills Bligh had acquired on Cook’s *Resolution* (1777-80) — when he had first heard about Fiji (Cook 1784, I: chapter X) — probably helped, along with the size of his boat. After the famous mutiny (28th April 1789) the commander of H.M.S. *Bounty* was left on a launch with a few men, poor navigation instruments and no map. His first voyage to Fiji reflected these circumstances. After a brutal experience in Tonga, Bligh avoided contact in Fiji. “...The Lieutenant kept the launch as much out to sea and out of sight as possible” (Gravelle 1979, I:15). In the north of the Yasawas two canoes chased the *Bounty*’s launch (7th May), but they eventually gave up. This pursuit is the closest to an interaction with natives that Bligh had in 1789:

“Whether these canoes had any hostile intention against us must remain a doubt: perhaps we might have benefited from an intercourse with them; but in our defenceless situation, to have made the experiment would have been risking too much.

“I imagine these to be the islands called Feejee, as their extent, direction, and distance from the Friendly Islands, answers to the description given of them by those Islanders.” (Bligh 1791:47)

### The *Pandora*’s tender (1791)

Possibly responsible, in part, for an early acquaintance of Westerners and Western things in Fiji, the adventure of a tender of H.M.S. *Pandora* has to be mentioned. In mid-



1791, probably in August, the tender *Matavy* might have anchored at one of Fiji's Eastern islands. According to Thomson and Henderson, it may have been Matuku (Henderson 1933:241-45), but more recent investigations suggest Ono-i-Lau as a probable landfall (Rogers 1983:74).

The tender's crew comprised Mr Oliver (master), midshipman Renouard, quartermaster James Dodds and six sailors (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:xx). They missed the *rendez-vous* with their flagship *Pandora* at Nomuka in late June-early July 1791 and sailed from Tofua on 1st August. On the next island they reached, they spent five weeks and traded provisions against "iron and salt" (Henderson 1933:245).

In his report, dated 25th November 1791, Captain Edwards of the *Pandora* wrote:

"We stopped at Samarang, being an island of Java, where we had the good fortune to be joined by our tender that had separated from us off the island of Oattoah. She had all her people on board except one man, whom they had buried a few days before. She had been stopped at Java on suspicion, and they were going to send her to Batavia. Mr. Overstratin, the Governor of the place, delivered her up to me. The tender had contracted a small debt for provisions &c. at Java, which I shall discharge. She fell in to the Westward of Annamooka, the island I had appointed to rendezvous on, without seeing it, and then steered two days to the Westward nearly in its latitude and fell in with an island which I suppose must be one of the Fiji Islands, where they had waited for me five weeks, and then proceeded through Endeavour Straits and intended to stop at Batavia. With the iron and salt I had provided them with they were enabled to procure and preserve sufficient provision for their run to Java." (<http://www.fatefulvoyage.com>, last consulted 22/09/2013)

George Hamilton, the surgeon of the *Pandora*, completed Edwards' statement in June 1971:

"On the 29th, we anchored in the road of Anamooka. Immediately on our arrival, a large sailing canoe was hired, and Lieut. Hayward and one private sent to the Happai and Feegee Islands, to make inquiry after the Bounty and our tender; but received no intelligence. Here they found an axe, which had been left by Capt. Cook, and bartered with the natives of the different islands for hogs, yams, &c." (<http://www.fatefulvoyage.com>, last consulted 22/09/2013)

The anecdote hardly taught anything new to Europe about the area. For us, however, it points out another exchange item used by Europeans in the area, salt. Interestingly, it was also traditionally exchanged in Fiji (Carry 1998:51).

Today, many valuables in Fiji (*iyau*) distinguish themselves from trivial things because, when involved in ceremonial presentations, they form larger units (multiples of ten) with specific names (e.g. mats, barkcloths, *tabua*). *Masima* (salt) is one of those. Each unit is presented in a cylindrical package or bottle-shaped basket called *tabanimasima* (bottle for the salt) or *katonimasima* (basket for the salt). In ceremonial

exchanges, ten *katonimasima* form one *wai* (Gatty 2009:156), like ten *tabua* are a *vulo*. A *katonimasima* is represented on five-dollar notes in Fiji today. One could see there another clue of their exchange value.



2.12— Fijian five-dollar note

Unknowingly, the crew of the Pandora's tender thus traded *iyau* against food. Since Sahlins described food as a special category of exchanged goods (1972:218-219), which we know were valued in Fiji and also involved in ceremonial presentations (*solevu*), the above transactions appear as acts of “balanced reciprocity” (Sahlins 1972).

### Bligh (1792)

Bligh came back to Fiji in 1792. On a second “breadfruit voyage,” he commanded H.M.S. *Providence* and *Assistance*. The expedition's purpose was similar to the *Bounty*'s. Bligh was to collect breadfruit plants in Tahiti and bring them to the West Indies, where, it was hoped, they would thrive. Bligh seized this second chance to fulfil what he had started in the 1780s, including the survey of Fiji. On the 5th August he caught sight of the Southern Lau again. On the 6th the ships entered the archipelago. They left it on the 11th, after they had sailed N.W. to Tavenui and switched to a S.W. course until Kadavu, which they rounded to leave by the south, heading for the New Hebrides.

The only recorded interactions with locals occurred near Moce — Bligh's “Sunday Island.” From the 6th August, several canoes came to the British ships. A few transactions happened. They mostly consisted in exchanging coconuts against “toeys



and nails”<sup>5</sup> but also involved a few fishing spears and clubs. Bligh and Portlock, in command of the *Assistance*, described these weapons as similar to Tongans’ — which does not help much. Weapons found in Tonga could have been Fijian-inspired, Fijian-made or even Fijian-owned objects and *vice versa* (see above). Yet, this example confirms that Fijians — Lauans here — were willing to trade coconuts and weapons with Europeans. The latter were probably plain, which could explain why Bligh barely mentioned them. They were traded against things Europeans considered as low value (see next part), but that Fijians obviously knew and valued — see Tobin’s *Providence* log, 6th August 1792 (Tobin 1791-93:248). Bligh estimated he paid well, and he did so in the hope of getting more things. And that is where weapons came into the game, after a first exchange that only involved coconuts. Fijians obviously hoped for better deals as well. Coconuts are common on islands. Weapons were probably a little more valued. In other words, the “sacrifices” were symmetrically consensual (see chapter 1). The straightforward aspects of this “barter,” along with a symmetrical posture of Bligh *vis-à-vis* the inhabitants of Moce, allows us to qualify their relations of “balanced reciprocity,” with reference to Sahlins (1972).

Beside the above items, other things were inaccessible. Among them were breastplates of polished pearl-shells (*civa*). Here is the first mention of these very important ornaments, which considerably evolved in the nineteenth century about. Like weapons, they are one of this thesis’ main threads. They played a central role in Fijian early societies, were one of Fiji’s most characteristic productions and illustrate early exchange relations between Fijians and Westerners well. Simple pearl-shell breastplates like Bligh saw were probably of great value in Fiji until the 1830s, until progressively overridden by composite breastplates of shell and whale ivory. Textual descriptions and comparison with later specimens suggest that, more than ornaments, they were markers of status, worn by high-ranking individuals. When Bligh stopped at Moce, he noticed pectorals made of a single *civa* shell — polished *Pinctada margaritifera* oyster or black-lip mother-of-pearl — worn high on the chest.

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<sup>5</sup> Barker suggested that “toyes” could be towies, i.e. bundles of threads or European fibres (Barker 1925:8). However, it is highly likely that they were metal axe blades, to which sailors gave the Tahitian name *to’i*, (an adze; New Zealand Maori *toki*).



PLATE I. FIJIAN VISITING H.M.S. "PROVIDENCE," CAPT. BLESS [1792]

Reproduced and Printed for the Hakluyt Society by Donald Mackin.

2.13— "Fijians visiting H.M.S. *Providence*" (Im Thurn and Wharton 1925: pl.1)

According to a sketch reproduced for the Hakluyt Society and published with the journal of William Lockerby, they were worn with the convex face against the chest and concave face visible; a way that contradicts the later fashion (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:iii). At 11:05, if it were a clock, two holes were pierced on the top thick part of the shell. They allowed the passage of the suspension cord(s). These perforations are a distinctive feature of Western Polynesian and Fijian breastplates. In Eastern Polynesia, notably in the Society Islands, pearl-shell pectorals existed too; but instead of two holes they have a series, and the suspension cord runs along the flat top of the shell before forming the necklace *per se* — see for instance Oc,LMS.72 (BM) illustrated by Hooper (2006:182, fig.139). Actually, in another sketch (below) attributed to the *Providence's* third Lieutenant, George Tobin, one Fiji man seems to wear a Tahitian-like breastplate, but the point of view is too distant and the drawing not precise enough to be sure. The value, material property and circulation of pearl-shell will be further discussed in the next chapter. For now, it seems important to point out that such ornaments were not made available for trade with Westerners in the late eighteenth century. Using Godelier's terminology (2004:19), they were "precious" items, perhaps "sacred" (*tabu*) ones, "inalienable" in the given circumstances.



2.14— “Canoes of Sunday’s Island” by G. Tobin (Henderson 1933:153)

Off Moce, Portlock also mentioned a cowry shell pendant and an armband made of a “string” worn just above the elbow. Cowries were another kind of shell ornament and rank marker in early Fiji. They became more numerous in museum collections from the late 1830s, having been rare before. White and golden cowries, *bulivula/bulidina* (*Ovula ovum*) and *bulikula* (*Cypraea aurantium*) respectively, were chiefly symbols, as were smaller white cowries (*bulileka*). More common specimens, *buliloa* (*Cypraea tigris*) were less valued.

Also inaccessible, Bligh described Fijian hairdressing, probably including a chiefly wig (*ulumate*). He indeed described a man’s headdress with ringlets dangling on the rear, “four inches long.” These were called *tobe* and distinguished high-ranking individuals from commoners (Clunie 1982b:3). Made of human hair, linked to ritual practices such as mourning sacrifices, and worn on the head — the most important part of the body in Fiji and Polynesia — wigs were precious ornaments, consistently not made available for transactions with Europeans in the late eighteenth century.

Although the contact was brief, Bligh and his men pointed out a few other practices and material productions in fashion in Fiji in the early 1790s. At Moce, they mentioned ear-lobe piercing and finger amputation — both mourning sacrifices (Clunie & Ligairi 1983b; Clunie 1979). They also noticed the way Fijian men attached *masi* cloth around their waist (*malo*) and, in Gau, around their head (*isala*). Furthermore, the

British crew recorded the first words of Fijian language to be written (Barker 1925:10) and noticed canoes and architectural forms found in the 1790s. Tobin also mentioned a “scarlet” cloth, used to attract the attention of the Europeans, but he could not recognize whether it was local or European.

Thus, Bligh’s 1792 survey gives the most detailed account of the eighteenth century in Fijian ethnography. The comments mainly focussed on Moce, Gau and Kadavu, and accompany a quite detailed and accurate chart (Henderson 1933:150). Although he knew it was the archipelago Tongans called Fiji, Bligh temporarily gave it his name. Fiji was briefly known as Bligh’s islands. Interestingly, all officers noticed the Fijian knowledge of and demand for Western things and the islanders’ willingness to enter in relation with the Whites as early as the 1790s. On the other hand, they seem unable to clearly distinguish Tongan from Fijian things (e.g. clubs, canoes) and languages. Their relative inexperience in the area and the long-standing entanglement of Fijian and Tongan cultures have to be taken into account here.

### D’Entrecasteaux (1793)

In many ways, d’Entrecasteaux’s stopover at Tongatapu in 1793 (23rd March-9th April) retraced Cook’s experiences (Labillardière 1800, II: chapter XII). That is why this section mainly insists on the differences between the two episodes, starting with their material implications.

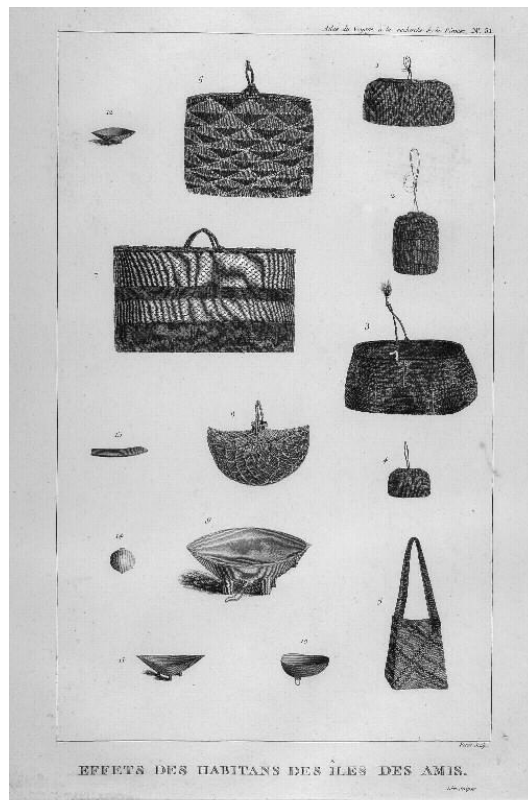
The first difference is methodological. Both Cook’s and d’Entrecasteaux’s collections were scattered on their arrival to Europe, but the work undertaken to reconstruct Cook’s corpus has not been done for d’Entrecasteaux’s. Most of the collections gathered on the *Recherche* and *Espérance* are currently lost. Among surviving ensembles, there is a small Tongan collection in Dunkerque (Musée des Beaux-Arts) and a slightly bigger and more diverse one in Amsterdam (Tropenmuseum).

In Dunkerque, no object could be strictly identified as Fijian rather than Tongan. In Amsterdam, Van Duuren spotted a few Fijian items (2007), some of which represented among Tongan artefacts in the publication of d’Entrecasteaux’s account (Labillardière 1800, II: pl.XXXIII). As in Cook’s collections, these identifiable items are mostly clubs; as if Fijians had hardly traded anything else with Europeans at first. Bligh’s experience (above) already confirmed this impression. The Amsterdam specimens validate an early attraction for Fijian weapons and prove that Europeans could acquire

them in the late eighteenth century. For other crafts we cannot be so sure. Pottery and barkcloths could have been equally distinctive if they had reached us, but distinctive specimens are now absent. The plate no. XXXI in Labillardière's volume shows a pottery that appears distinctively Fijian and that is so designated by Labillardière:

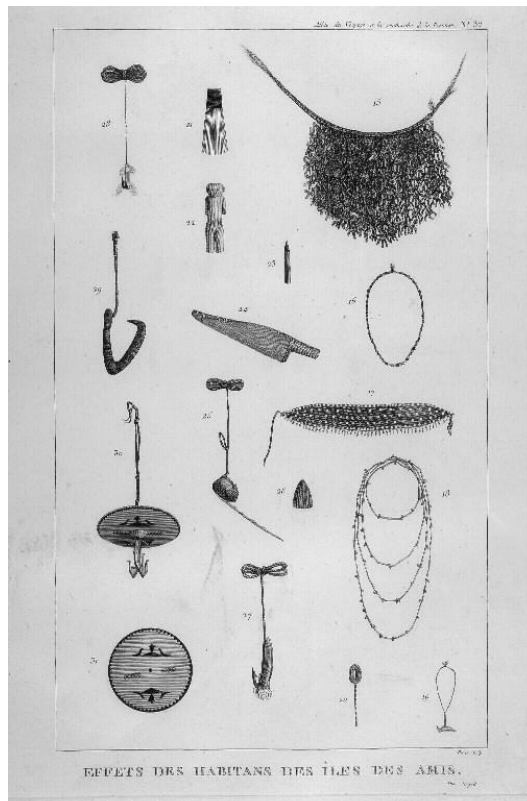
"The art of the potter has made no great progress among these people. We saw in their possession some very porous earthen vessels, which they had baked indeed, but very slightly. In these they kept fresh water, which would have quickly filtered through them, if they had not taken the precaution to give them a coating of resin. Vessels thus made could be of no use to them in dressing victuals. The natives showed us some of a tolerably elegant form, which they said had been brought from Feejee. (See Plate XXXI. Fig. 8.)" (Labillardière 1800, II:126)

This specimen could be a *saqa* or priest' drinking vessel (Clunie 2003a: fig.16). Unfortunately, no matching artefact has been identified to date. Were other types ever collected? Some artefacts may have been lost or destroyed — notably if they were basketry works, much more fragile than clubs —; others might have been confused with later objects. The following plates give us an idea of what might have been acquired in Tonga during d'Entrecasteaux's visit, including a few perhaps-Fijian artefacts:



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

2.15— "Effets des habitans des îles des amis" (Labillardière 1800: pl.XXXI)



Among the Tropenmuseum's clubs, there is one *totokia*. Stylistically, it confirms what will be explained in the second part of this chapter about early specimens of this kind. Like Cook's example (fig.2.2), it is short-beaked. Its head is small and decorated with four rows of knobs. Its beak is conical and stubby. Its shaft is plain and, like on many Fijian clubs, it flares up through the base. Like Cook's specimen, it is also known through an image (Labillardière 1800, Atlas: pl.XXXIII, n°37), but its current location is known. According to Van Duuren, this artefact now belongs to the Tropenmuseum (cat. n°A-1605).

Another club, identified by Van Duuren enlarges the range of early Fijian weapons known. It is a *bowai* club, that resembles a baseball bat. Similar forms existed in Tonga (*povai*). However, this example (A-1643), for as much as we can see from the picture, seems Fijian. Its base flares up a little; it is plain but smoothly polished. Many Tongan pieces of the late eighteenth century were entirely engraved. Here, the absence of decoration pleads in favour of a Fijian attribution.

Van Duuren also identified a paddle-like club (*culacula*) as d'Entrecasteaux's, but this type too was shared between Fiji and Tonga. In both places, it had the same name (*culacula*). This specimen is longer than the other pieces (123 centimetres long). Its blade is quite narrow (22 centimetres) and presents indentations on each edge. Again, the shaft is plain, for as much as we can tell from the picture (Van Duuren 2007:70, A-1630).

Two other pieces are listed as Fijian by Van Duuren, but one could be more sceptical. First, there is a kind of wooden sword, or cutlass (*Ibid.*:64-65), with a similar artefact shown on the plate XXXIII (n°40). How did Van Duuren come to the conclusion that it could not be Tongan? And if it were not, why did he think it would be Fijian? During this research, no other artefact of this kind was encountered — certainly none that could be regarded as Fijian. About it, Labillardière mentioned "a kind of bone cutlass," like he described another object on the plate XXXIII as "a kind of bone sabre" (n°41). The latter look like a European short sword. The visual and textual closeness between the two suggest that, if n°40 was not a European sabre *per se*, it could have been an imitation, the result of locals' or sailors' carving skills.<sup>6</sup> Clunie recognised the

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<sup>6</sup> Sailors sometimes carved replacement pieces for their vessels and wood-carving was also a pastime. It is therefore possible that they used things from their immediate environment as models, including weapons. They might then have used their carvings in the trade with the natives. We will see in chapter 4 that they

features of “a naval dirk or perhaps a cutlass that had lost its hand-guard” (personal communication, 1st September 2011). This suggests a local production of European-like objects in the area, from the late eighteenth century. As elsewhere, such replicas must have been frequent material expressions of contact (see Thomas 2012:277).

Labillardière’s descriptions of “bone” objects, where “bone” is used as an adjective to qualify “sabre” or “cutlass,” may also suggest that they were made of whalebone, which would plead in favour of a Tongan provenance:

“Almost all their clubs are made with the wood of the *casuarina*, which is extremely hard; yet we saw a few of bone, somewhat more than a yard long. As these islanders have no quadruped capable of furnishing a bone of such length, there can be no doubt but it must belong to some large animal of the whale genus.” (Labillardière 1800, II:100, original emphasis)

Yet, from the picture it seems quite impossible that n°41 was made of bone. It may have been a wooden “club” in the form of a European cutlass (Thomas 2012:277). In any event, it seems to confirm that things of foreign origin were in use in Tonga when d’Entrecasteaux visited, and that some of them were accessible to Western visitors.

The last club Van Duuren attributed to Fiji is of a rare kind, which he suggests was a “*velau dromu (?)*” (2007:68-69, original emphasis). Although he proceeded by comparison and elimination, this is problematic. Van Duuren referred to the Delft 1888 catalogue and to Clunie’s *Fijian Weapons and Warfare* (2003b, fig.12g). A comparison with Oldman’s plates (1943) followed. Both are unsatisfying. Oldman’s attributions may have been wrong — and in that case probably were — and this example is quite far from a *velaudromu*, which Clunie confirmed.<sup>7</sup> To him, both Oldman’s and the Tropenmuseum’s pieces are likely to be Tongan, and this can be confirmed by comparison with known Tongan clubs. Mills, for example, listed types of ‘*akau* (clubs) from early Tongan collections. Among these, there are a few “stellate” shapes (Family J). Some, like the type “J5,” remind the Tropenmuseum’s specimen (Mills 2007, II:29-30). One cannot say clubs like this could not be found in Fiji, or acquired from Fijians, but a Tongan origin is most likely.

Another kind of club is represented on plate XXXIII, n°39. It corresponds to a Fijian type, but this specimen has not been found in the Tropenmuseum’s collection.

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probably faked local weapons too. The probable mutual influences of local and ships’ carpenters should not be underestimated in early contacts.

<sup>7</sup> *Velaudromu* clubs “simply have a series of shallow furrows running up the head and are designed to smash rather than cleave into [the] head.” (Clunie, personal communication, 1st September 2011)



From the engraving, it seems to be a *gata* club with a rather thick quadrangular section and a quite short spur.

To finish, the fan n°35 on the same plate is of a kind shared between Fiji and Tonga that still exists today. Such fans are common in museum collections, including early collections from Tonga. It is a good example of the formal continuity observable in some crafts in Fiji and the region.

### Learning a little more: the voyages of Barber, Wilson and Bentley

Why did neither Cook nor d'Entrecasteaux carry on by actually visiting Fiji? The question remains unanswered. Thomas evoked a certain tiredness, along with concerns about the cattle survival, from Cook. The constraints of the mission could also be taken into account. Both Cook and d'Entrecasteaux had things to do when they left Tonga. Cook was interested in the fur trade in the northern Pacific; d'Entrecasteaux was still in search of Lapérouse's wrecks. Yet, the curiosity and desire to make new discoveries could have been stronger. One may suspect that the ferocious reputation of Fijians, just coming to notice at the time, was already intimidating for Europeans.

By chance, a few other explorers, on purpose or not, pursued the European "discovery" of Fiji, geographically speaking. Their observations teach us a little more about Fiji-West early contacts.

#### *Barber (1794)*

Two years after Bligh, the ship *Arthur*, captain Barber, was the first — and one of the only among European sailing vessels — to arrive in Fiji from the west. It was on 26th April 1794, at the end of the hurricane season in Fiji.

In contrast to what has been described so far, Barber's encounter with Fiji was a violent one — the first and unfortunately not the last. While at anchor (the precise location is unclear) the ship was attacked by islanders on their canoes. "Two of the crew were wounded... with arrows." The Fijians Barber met seemed unacquainted with white men and reluctant to trade with them. This description contrasts with what has been said about eastern counterparts, used to Western vessels and in contact with Tongans. (Henderson 1933:255-57)

### *Wilson (1797)*

Three years later, James Wilson found another way through the Fijian archipelago. He was in command of the ship *Duff* (1796-98). She marked the history of the Pacific by bringing the first missionaries of the London Missionary Society to Tahiti and Tonga. In Fiji, Wilson acted like an explorer. He sailed from Tongatapu on the 7th September 1797. He entered Fijian waters on the 9th and sailed to Cikobia-i-Ra. On the 14th, he left the group to the north, after he had passed Taveuni by the east.<sup>8</sup>

First, Wilson wished to have intercourse with the inhabitants and to properly survey the islands. He started with Vanuabalavu, of which he provided a chart and a coastal view (Henderson 1933:200-202). Yet, quickly the fear of getting shipwrecked overcame scientific impulses. He gave up.

By 1797, the Fijian reputation of ferocity was well-framed. Wilson seemed impressed with it too. He made few “discoveries” in Fiji. After 154 years, he identified Tasman’s Prince William’s Islands and found a way out in the north — out of pure chance, judging from Dumont d’Urville’s vain attempt to follow his track in 1827. He added a few pieces to the puzzle, and contributed to spreading the myth of Fijian dangers.

### *Bentley (1799)*

Christopher Bentley, in command of the *Ann and Hope*, a trading ship on her way to China, became the first European to go by the south of Vitilevu. There, he “discovered” a few islands, including Vatulele — his “Cocoanut island” — and Beqa. On 5th December 1799, he passed Kadavu — his “Hope island.” On the 6th, he sailed away from Malolo and Waya islands (north-east). No interaction with Fijians was recorded.

## Unveiling Fiji to Europe

### *Cook at Vatoa (1774)*

Cook and his men seemed relaxed when they approached Vatoa. They did not emphasize any danger in their journals, not even that of the imposing reefs around Vatoa and nearby (Vuatavatoa), which were fatal to other vessels (Cary 1998[1887]). Cook must

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<sup>8</sup> This voyage is known by the official publication (Wilson 1799) and through the log of the second officer on the *Duff*, Thomas Godsell. Wilson’s original log is currently lost (Henderson 1933:195).

have benefited from better weather and visibility than most early explorers of the archipelago. The inhabitants, although they were armed, did not scare him or his crewmen. It is likely that Europeans did not yet have prejudices against Fijians. To Cook they were simply unknown, whereas their skin colour and cannibal reputation were to condition many subsequent encounters. This relaxed attitude, however, did not seem mutual. Eventually, all Fijians fled and, interestingly, they took with them the most valuable object mentioned in Cook's account, their canoe. This pattern was to be found in later interactions too, including violent ones. Fijians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used to flee with their belongings, and especially with their valuables, when they felt threatened. In most cases, they left very few things behind and hardly anything of any worth from a Fijian or a Western viewpoint. This recurring pattern may help us evaluate what was valued and what was not — or valued less — in the early contact period in Fiji. Also, it tells us much about Fijian strategies to not give away things they did not want to, including what Weiner would call inalienable objects. In 1774, the inhabitants of Vatoa were probably not used to seeing white men, though they may have heard about them. Yet, they were certainly acquainted with receiving visits from their Fijian or Tongan neighbours, some of them no doubt hostile (Cary 1998[1887]; Young 1982).

### *Trading goods — low value items*

Interestingly, Cook's approach to this brief interaction was a trading one. The objects given away that day are of particular relevance. Forster's account confirms that they comprised "some nails, a knife and a few medals" (G. Forster 2000:421) — i.e. usual trade items provided by Western governments and commercial companies since the sixteenth century for the purpose of barter with local populations. Nails and knives were common traded metal tools, usually of poor quality (also hatchets, fish hooks and razors). Along with glass beads, they were usually designated as "trifles" by seamen, because of their little value from a Western viewpoint, and despite their exchange value. The content and amount of this basic trade stock varied from one expedition to another, but not much over the decades.<sup>9</sup> Here, as often, "trifles" were supplemented by more valued items, in this case medals.

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<sup>9</sup> See for example Dumont d'Urville's trade stock on the *Astrolabe* before she departed in 1826 (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, I:LIV).

### *Trading goods — medals*

Bronze or copper medals were traditionally used during European voyages; some being made for each expedition. Usually, they bore information about the expedition on one side, such as its departure date, the name of the ship(s) and that of the captain. On the other side often figured a portrait of the country's leader. From reading a number of accounts, one may notice that medals were prized and considered meaningful by European crews. Among other purposes, they served as proofs of sailors' achievements. Even though they were distributed to the locals, they mostly targeted the Western sailors who would come later. Thus, Cook probably wanted to secure his "discovery" by giving a few medals away at Vatoa.

Specifically here, the medals and "trifles" appear to have been tokens of friendly intentions. Yet, Cook did not stay long enough to know if the message had been understood or not. As far as we know, nobody ever saw these medals again. It is therefore difficult to speculate about what happened to them. Now, another suggestion can be made about Cook's intention. Sailors were at sea for weeks, sometimes months. They required food and fresh water. Even though they had successfully increased their food stock at Nomuka, Cook's men would probably have enjoyed extra provisions from this unexpected island. Hence, Cook's "gifts" to Vatoa's inhabitants might be interpreted as an advance or payment for possible foodstuffs to be taken. In any event, since the idea of a reciprocation remained quite loose in these circumstances, the European attitude may be perceived as an act of "generalized reciprocity" (see Sahlins 1972)

### *Food — turtles*

Fishing was a common way of procuring supplies. Fish were sought as well as turtles. The latter were actually prized. Having seen "a dozen" of them, the sailors hoped to capture a few. Yet, the animals seemed only to be found near Vatoa itself, and more precisely "in the harbour." None could be caught around Vuatavatoa (G. Forster 2000:421).

Fijians have long valued turtles, which both historical sources and current practices confirm.<sup>10</sup> Formerly in some areas of Fiji, an important equivalence existed

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the three species of turtle that can be found in Fiji today — the green turtle and Fijian turtle *par excellence* (*vonudina*), the leatherback turtle (*taba-i-valu*, *tutuwalu* or *vonudakulaca*) and the hawksbill turtle (*vonutaku*) — are currently protected species. However, the Bureau of Fisheries still occasionally provide permits for turtles to be harvested for "traditional purposes." See [www.naturefiji.org](http://www.naturefiji.org)

between human beings (*tamata*) and turtles (*vonu*) and, by extension, between dead bodies for cannibal consumption (*bokola*) and turtle flesh.<sup>11</sup> Both were the food of gods and chiefs — who were considered equivalent in pre-Christian Fiji (Sahlins 1983:80; 1985:75ff.). This equivalence partly explains why turtle meat is still a very special kind of food in Fiji today, reserved for ceremonial feasts (*magiti*) and often solely for chiefly consumption (*kakana vakaturaga*) as it was in the past (Arno 1979:8; Henderson 1931a:10). In some areas turtles were also associated with totemic or religious beliefs (Deane 1921:30; Morgan 2007). Fishing them was, and still is, an important matter with great political, economic and religious implications (Morgan 2007). It was sometimes submitted to chiefly authorisation and the prerogative of specialists (*gonedau*). Fishing, killing and cooking turtles required careful preparation, specific skills and the vigilant observance of rules and taboos (*tabu*) (Toganivalu 1913; Deane 1921:175-181). For all those reasons, it was not unusual to capture the animals early and to keep them alive in fenced enclosures (Deane 1921:180) or special ponds (Seemann 1862:385) until the moment to sacrifice them arrived.

Vatoa is not currently known as a turtle nesting site<sup>12</sup> and, even though locations change over time, July is not the turtle nesting season in Fiji. It is therefore probable that the turtles observed at Vatoa in 1774 had been gathered in preparation for a special occasion, even though no fence was mentioned. They were probably *tabu* (set apart, forbidden). One may consequently wonder what could have happened if the crew had indeed caught turtles in 1774. It would certainly have affected the Fijians' perception of these visitors if they had been seen hunting and feeding on *tabu* turtles, like chiefs/gods. In any event, it would be good to keep in mind this cultural significance, for turtle shells, of the hawksbill notably, were to become important commodities in later trade relations between Fijians and Westerners (see next chapter).

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(last consulted 18/03/2011). Steven Hooper (personal communication, august 2013) mentioned having seen turtles provided for feasts at Tubou, Lakeba (Lau) and at Somosomo (Cakaudrove) during important chiefly gatherings over the last thirty-five years.

<sup>11</sup> In some places, for example, the turtle was called *ikatamata* (human fish), due to similarities between animal and man's characteristics, in breathing, bleeding, fighting for life, etc. (Deane 1921:176; Deane 1910:60). The equivalence was bidirectional since the *bokola* was sometimes called "long-turtle" (*vonu balavu*) in eastern Fiji, and similar rituals took place around the capture and consumption of both the *vonu balavu* and the *vonu lekaleka* ("short" or actual turtle) (Deane 1921:238; Sahlins 2003:4). NB: In some places (e.g. Western Vitilevu), pigs (*vuaka*) were likewise prized as chiefly food, important feast relish and ceremonial gifts (Deane 1921; Brewster 1922) and, by extension, also considered equivalent to *bokola*. They were then called, similarly to turtles, *vuaka balavu*, "long pig" (Endicott quoted by Schütz 1978:4). Such similarities existed outside Fiji too, in Samoa for example (Krämer 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Current nesting sites to be found on [www.naturefiji.org](http://www.naturefiji.org) (last consulted 22/03/2011)

### *The eighteenth century scientific background of European explorers*

In contrast to previous expeditions, which were mainly commercial (Tasman's) or evangelical (Portuguese and Spanish voyages from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries), Cook's voyages were primarily scientific — particularly the first and second ones. The “curiosities” acquired during these voyages, both natural and artificial, were obtained in the context of scientific enquiry (Kaeppler 1978a:1ff.; 2009:40-82). This aspect reflects the intellectual context of European early explorations of the Pacific.

The naturalists on board the *Resolution*, Johann Reinhold Forster and his son Georg, provide us with very good contextual references to examine the state of science — though it was not called that then —, and the place of human studies in Europe in the second part of the eighteenth century (J. R. Forster 1996; G. Forster 2000). The study of mankind was not an autonomous field. It was related to philosophy or natural history (Kaeppler 2009), and religion still influenced both these fields. J.R. Forster was a typical scholar of his time. As a natural historian he showed affinities with Buffon and Linnaeus, who considered humankind as one part of Nature, even though human beings were thought to stand above the other creatures (Buffon 1749). As an “ethic philosopher,” Forster was a monogenist, which means he believed in one species of men, even though, like Blumenbach, he considered it was separated into many varieties (J.R. Forster 1996:xxvi). Such diversity, that polygenists regarded as original, was a central concern of eighteenth-century scholars. By all means they tried to explain it. For example, like his peers of the Scottish Enlightenment (e.g. Millar and Ferguson) and some of his contemporaries (e.g. Lord Kames), Forster closely looked into the effects of climate on peoples as a potential source of differences (J.R. Forster 1996:xxiv). Like most natural historians of his time, he also attempted to classify people and considered some as superior to others. He thus described two varieties of Pacific people, one “more fair” and the other “blacker” (J.R. Forster 1996:153). Thomas — who, with others, re-edited the book originally published in 1778 — summarizes:

“The people of the ‘second race,’ that is those inhabiting the Western Pacific, are manifestly inferior to those of the first, partly on the basis of familiar racial criteria such as colour and alleged physical ‘deformity,’ but also because, like some less advanced groups among the ‘first race’ and the Tierra del Fuegians, they do not welcome the Europeans or are uninterested in the novel goods that the Europeans have to offer.” (in J.R. Forster 1996:xxxiv)

The last criterion is especially interesting. It highlights Western prejudices and the difficulties Europeans had in understanding non-European value systems, as early as the 1770s. Because they supposed their material modernity to be hugely attractive, they considered it a lack of discernment not to desire European things, even when they were mere “trifles” from their own viewpoint.

Forster’s interpretation of the variations he observed within the two “great varieties,” however, undermines a little the presumed superiority of Europe he suggested elsewhere. Forster indeed believed that variations resulted from the degenerations and migrations of one original model, quite idealized and rather tropical like Tahiti; but in a typical eighteenth-century way of thinking, from which the “noble savage” myth stemmed, the paths of these deteriorations paralleled European-like “progress” or “social coercion” (e.g. Rousseau’s and Diderot’s theories). Nevertheless, Forster did not idealize Tahiti like some of his contemporaries. Instead of “natural liberty” and “pre-social innocence,” he depicted an “historically contingent social form” (J. R. Forster 1996:xxxiii) in which Tahiti was, however, the reference to measure societies’ advancement. These questionings and theories continued to have influence until the late nineteenth century. Progressively, some became obsolete (e.g. the noble savage), but all had an influence on what we now regard as the beginnings of anthropology.

As a result of its natural history background, the study of non-European people at that time had mainly to do with physical observations. Investigations of social structures and customs came second, out of curiosity and philosophical challenges. Material productions were examined only marginally. In the eighteenth century, people’s apparent happiness was an essential criterion for classification, while artefacts only provided complementary information on societies’ development. In chapter 4, we will see that it soon was the other way around (see also Douglas 1999:69). During Cook’s second voyage, there was no direct application of this to the Fijian case, apart from G. Forster’s description of “blackish-brown men” (G. Forster 2000:421). The contact was too brief for any further investigation. More was to be found soon, by Cook and others who met Fijians in Tonga in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

## Western Polynesian connections

The Tongan background of Cook and d'Entrecasteaux's encounters with Fijian material culture is crucial. On one hand, Europeans barely explored the Fijian archipelago before the nineteenth century. Some went close (e.g. Tasman 1643, Cook 1774), others even sailed across, providing partial maps (e.g. Bligh, Wilson), but to explore Fijian waters remained highly hazardous until the mid-nineteenth century. Most of those who approached Fiji in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries nearly wrecked, because of Fiji's numerous reefs and changing winds (Henderson 1933). On the other hand, Europeans soon became acquainted with what we now call Tonga (Bott 1982). These "Friendly Islands" were on sailing routes; and soon they benefited from stereotyped representations of Pacific islanders, that favoured the Polynesian "vahine" over the Melanesian "cannibal" (Boulay 2005; Boulay 2001).

Despite such divergent perceptions of Fiji and Tonga, the two archipelagos were close exchange partners. Following a model of kin relations that Kaeppler described and analysed, goods and spouses circulated between Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, along with craftsmen, raw materials, patterns, ceremonial practices and skills (Kaeppler 1978b). Most voyagers' accounts evoked dynamic movements of people and objects within Western Polynesia. Such traffic depended on the winds, the prevailing ones blowing from southeast to northwest. The Europeans were no exception. Most navigators went from Tonga to Fiji. Nomuka and Tongatapu had a number of well-known anchorages. Charted during the last decades of the eighteenth century, they had a good reputation for providing supplies and fresh water. From the first encounters, they became privileged entry points to the Fijian archipelago, which was approached through its eastern part (Lau). This Tongan *springboard* grew in importance over the decades, up to its essential role in the missionary settlement of Lau in the 1830s (chapter 5). Fiji and Tonga relations were also decisive in terms of politics. Tongan involvement into Fijian affairs grew stronger over the period of study, until it reached a climax in the third quarter of the nineteenth century (see Routledge 1985, Spurway 2001, Young 1993). This emphasizes the fact that exchange relations between Fijians and Westerners were built on pre-existing networks and influenced by a variety of stimuli.

Western Polynesian connections also shaped distinctive but connected material cultures. Many crafts that Fiji, Tonga and Samoa (and 'Uvea, Futuna, Niue, etc.) had in common show mutual influences. Such crafts include barkcloth, basketry or the use of



whale ivory. A few parallels are visible, with time-lags, in the evolution of each culture. Some discrepancies and resemblances can also be related to contact with Europeans. For instance, the use and spread of whale ivory will be further discussed in chapter 3. Ivory was not only transferred from traders and whalers to islanders; it also circulated among Pacific islanders and among Westerners. Cook's and d'Entracasteaux's observations and acquisitions in Tonga exemplify such connections.

### *Cook in Tonga (1777)*

In total, Cook spent nearly three months in Tonga, during his second and third voyages. The *Resolution* and *Adventure* stopped there between the 2nd and 7th October 1773 and between the 26th and 29th June 1774; and in 1777, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* anchored at Tongatapu for provisions, from the 28th April to mid July. From these visits, Europe acquired a significant knowledge of Tongan eighteenth-century society (e.g. political structures, material culture). Cook's experiences of Tonga are therefore important milestones to understand the history and art history of the region. The Tongan artefacts he collected may help also to identify Fijian artefacts in the early museum collections, where Fijian and Tongan pieces are often grouped. They are also key references to study changes in Fijian material culture through Western Polynesian influences, and to evaluate what Pacific islanders and Europeans valued in their late eighteenth century transactions.

### *Tongan influences on European perceptions of Fiji*

Retrospectively, we can assume that Fijians travelled to Tonga for trade/exchange and for political reasons (Kaeppler 1978b). Transactions between Fiji and Tonga have been described as Tongan-centred by Kaeppler, even though she acknowledges a higher status of Fijians over Tongans (*Ibid.*:247). However, due to the influence and conquest-like behaviour of the Tongan kingdom in the area in the nineteenth century, these links have often been described in Tonga's favour. Cook's voyage accounts provide a historical background to both statements, and also show how much Fiji-Tonga relations influences the knowledge European historically acquired about Fiji.

Tongan attitudes towards Fijians were described in Cook's 1777 account as a mixture of fear and deference. For the first time, Fijians were depicted as fierce warriors and cannibals, which is very much what Europeans were to think about them for the

next hundred years. Cook compared Fijian cannibalism with New Zealanders' war practices, already feared by Europeans, and he opposed it to Tongan presumably peaceful political strategies. This dichotomy matched European imaginaries of savage versus friendly islanders, where cannibalism was as an aggravating factor, whatever the race (see also chapter 4). Cook expressed the dialectic well: "This practice [cannibalism] is detested very much by those of Tongataboo, who cultivate the friendship of their savage neighbours of Feejee, apparently out of fear..." (Cook 1784, I:374).

Despite "fear," the relationships between Tonga and Fiji were so important that, according to Cook and his men "Feejee" and "Hamoā" (Samoa) were related to Tongatapu like Vavao was. On a list of neighbouring islands they made with Tongan help, the British described Fiji and Samoa as "large islands," not as archipelagos. Although Cook had "not the least doubt that Prince William's Islands, discovered and so named by Tasman, are included in the foregoing list" (Cook 1784, I:369) he, of course, could not associate them with what Tongans called "Feejee." In addition to questioning modern frontiers, this confirms the weight of Tonga onto Fiji-Europe historical relations. For example, Cook must have heard the Tongan word *Fisi*, transcribed as Feejee. Fijians say *Viti*. Yet, historically, it is the Tongan inspired pronunciation of "Fiji" that survived, notably on Western maps and languages.

### Fijian and Tongan material cultures

Also, Fiji-Tonga connections may have influenced Cook's perception of Fiji's material culture. He, for example, attributed Tongan respect "not only, perhaps, from the power and cruel manner of their nation's going to war, but also from their ingenuity" (Cook 1784, I:375). Here is another dialectical opposition, recurrent in early voyager's accounts. The Fijians' reputation as ferocious warriors was often balanced with the refinements of Fijian cultural expressions, including material culture. Fijian objects and materials were in demand in Tonga — and *vice versa*. Often, Europeans judged them superior to what they could observe elsewhere in the Pacific, according to both local and Western criteria. A certain astonishment resulted. It is transparent here:

"...they [Feejee men] seem to excel the inhabitants of Tongataboo in that respect [ingenuity], if we might judge from several specimens of their skill in workmanship which we saw; such as clubs and spears, which were carved in a very masterly manner; cloth beautifully chequered; variegated mats; earthen pots, and some other articles; all which had a cast of superiority in the execution." (Cook 1784, I:375)

Clubs especially were very distinctive and intricately carved. Many accounts related that Fijian men carried them everywhere, even swimming with them when necessary, as early as the first decade of the nineteenth century (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:109). They were therefore frequently seen by Europeans, who may have desired them for their originality, attributed beauty and also because they reminded them of the warrior reputation of Fijians,<sup>13</sup> not forgetting that many collectors were military themselves. These characteristics — visibility, high demand and number — probably rendered clubs relatively easy to obtain and contributed to make them the Fijian object *par excellence* in museum collections. Cook's voyages prove to be relevant in that matter as well. They also explain how the British fitted into Pacific pre-existing networks and sometimes extended them.

### Clubs in Sarah Stone's paintings and early weaponry styles

The current location of the specimens in Sarah Stone's paintings is unknown. However, by showing items that could be considered as some of the earliest Fijian clubs ever acquired by Europeans, Stone's sketches provide precious information about early types of weapons in use in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Kaeppler's recent work (2011), comparing Stone's paintings with a number of artefacts now in European museums, demonstrated that Stone's watercolours were generally quite accurate. Therefore, even though they cannot be regarded as photographic records, these paintings give a quite good idea of what was kept at the Leverian museum. In the case of possibly Fijian artefacts, the paintings provide us with stylistic details, which may be considered as chronological markers for the study of the evolution of Fijian weaponry. Also, they highlight an early European taste for Fijian weapons.

As discussed earlier, the *totokia* specimen (Stone 1968:127) has a rather small head with a very short beak or pointed end. The part where the head swells is covered with four rows of small knobs. Stone represented them quite irregular in their shapes and dimensions and imperfectly aligned. Pointed projections like these are typical of

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<sup>13</sup> It must be noticed that Tongan weapons were among the most collected artefacts in the eighteenth century, precisely when the Tongan archipelago began to be known as the Friendly Islands. Therefore, even though a reference to the Fijian war-habits may be evoked as a collecting criterion, it cannot be retained as a sole explanation for the extensive acquisition of Fijian clubs by early European voyagers. It seems that indigenous weapons were widely available for trade with Westerners in Western Polynesia, and that they were willingly acquired by Europeans from the eighteenth century onwards.

*totokia* clubs. They may evoke the fruit of the pandanus tree, which justifies the modern inscription on the plate, “Fijian ‘pandanus’ club.” Later *totokia* clubs are usually more regular in their volumes, with sections better distinguished from one another (shaft, head, beak), curving and smooth lines, multiple and harmoniously spread pointed conical knobs. Beaks especially have a tendency to be elongated in nineteenth-century examples, which tend to confirm the evolution from older *ituki* types described by Clunie (2003b:111, 114). On later specimens too, beaks often show a central inflexion before a bulbous extremity, likely more decorative than functional. Of course, such formal differences may be related not only to the period of making but also to the carvers’ origin, to the location and influence of their workshops, etc. Unfortunately, very little is known about such factors.

The specimen Sarah Stone represented appears rougher in its carving than most nineteenth-century *totokia* now in museums. This may be consistent with the use of local stone tools, although those were frequently sharper than poor quality ironware, before the introduction of incisive metal tools in the course of the 1800s. It may also suggest a functional efficiency as a battle-hammer, which has sometimes disappeared on later specimens. Unfortunately, that single sketch does not allow us to draw any conclusion nor to generalize.

On the *cali* club (Stone 1968:128), Stone carefully depicted carved designs on the blade. These appear as typical *tavatava* or zigzags patterns, frequent on Fijian clubs from early museum collections. Yet, interestingly, on Stone’s paintings no clubs show any decoration on the shaft, not even on the lower part or grip where carving or binding is often observed on nineteenth-century specimens. This might suggest a stylistic evolution and/or imply that European explorers did not obtain the most decorated items — unless those were lost or improperly identified in museums. Also, we know little of the circumstances of Stone’s work and how clearly visible to her were items in the Leverian museum.

The Tropenmuseum’s clubs attributed to d’Entrecasteaux’s expedition provide us with supplementary data. Most previously-listed clubs share two features which help in our examination of early Fijian weapons. Most are quite small in comparison with later specimens, and their shaft is plain, without carving or other decoration. The *culacula* excepted, they are one metre long at the most, and even the *culacula* paddle-club looks quite narrow in contrast to later pieces. Regarding the shaft, they might have been

decorated with less permanent means than carving (e.g. lashing). Yet, such decorations were habitually quite durable, as we will see with examples from the 1830s (chapters 3 & 4); and where they now are missing, traces usually remain on the shaft. It seems that Fijian clubs accessible to Europeans in early times were plain. This can indicate either that Europeans only had access to ordinary pieces, or that most Fiji clubs of the late eighteenth century were not carved or otherwise adorned. It was probably a little of both. The chiefly rank of the Fijian met on Tongatapu in 1793 (see below) suggests that, he could have had more decorated specimens if they had existed. Yet, the pieces the sailors obtained were plain. Interestingly, Mills noticed a similar evolution of Tongan early *'akau* (see above quote, from personal communication, 16th August 2008).

On the *gata* club from d'Entrecasteaux's voyage, the spur, as it has been represented, seems quite small, like that of the *totokia* of both Cook and d'Entrecasteaux collections. This could be another feature of Fijian early clubs in museums. On types with a pointed projection (i.e. *totokia*, *cali*, *gata*), this attribute is likely to have grown in size over time, being quite short on early examples, just big enough to make functional, solid weapons.

### Trade items and relevant colours

Metal tools have already been mentioned. More interesting perhaps are the beads exchanged in 1777, and especially the blue ones that Cook designates as the most valued (1784, I:365-366). For Europeans, glass beads were trinkets, but their material and aspect, hard, shiny and translucent — glassy in a word — fascinated Pacific Islanders. In other words, they exerted a strong agency. Their colours probably did as well. Among them, blue was special. Even though it exists in Nature (e.g. sky, sea, insects), it is hardly present in any natural pigment. European blue things, like cloth and beads, were consequently much valued throughout the Pacific and were soon added to objects to which they brought a mark of novelty and the exotic. About this, Vanuatu provides many good examples, including the use of “laundry blue” from the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> In Fiji

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<sup>14</sup> “Laundry blue” is a kind of washing soda. In the past, it was used in Europe as a whitening detergent. Westerners imported it to the Pacific where it became part of the pigment range of many places, among which Vanuatu's may be the best known.

In Fiji, “laundry blue” was interestingly called *wailoaloa*, which literally means “black water.” Various cultures perceive and name colours differently (Berlin & Kay 1969). For instance, the Fijian red encompasses a wider range of hues than an European would usually call red, from brown to gold, going through pink and orange. In the same way, in Fiji today, what could be called blue elsewhere is sometimes

as well, the demand for blue things, including beads, was high (Dodge 1972:187). From what can be seen in museums, we can presume that this attraction lasted until the mid-nineteenth century at least. Early Fijian objects including blue beads are, however, quite rare. On the few specimens encountered during this research, such beads are usually a minority kind, isolated from the others by playing with colours and material contrasts. This parsimony confirms their value. Blue-beaded objects were obviously hardly accessible to Europeans in early times; and, even though some accounts suggest that they were quite extensively exchanged, blue beads seemed reserved to precious or sacred things, henceforth inalienable.<sup>15</sup>

Two other important colours are mentioned in Cook's and other early accounts, red and white. Both were — and still are — associated with high status and *tabu* things in Fiji. White materials were used as rank markers: white cowries (*bulivula*), turbans of white barkcloth (*isala*), etc. Red too, in a larger sense than European red, distinguished special (*tabu*) things and people: red feathers (*kula*); golden cowry shell (*bulikula*), smoked *masi* cloth (*masi kuvui*), and of course “red *tabua*” (*tabuadamu*). This given, Cook's opposition between white and blue beads is surprising (1784, I:365-366).

Both colours seem to have been equally important in early Fijian imaginaries. This given, the same word, *kula*, could be applied to blue and red things (Gatty 2009:124). Because *kula* seems related to Polynesian words for red, it is usually considered as just another word for red, synonym to the Fijian *damudamu*. Sometimes, Fijians seem to distinguish a bright red — that of the feathers of the *kula* bird — from a the muddy red (*damudamu*) — that of painted (*kesa*) *masi* cloths, or the red of the earth. Yet, people in Fiji also use the word *kula* to talk about things they would qualify of “golden” in English (e.g. some cowry shells, things from the sacred island Burotu), or even “blue” (to them) or “green” (to me) like the feathers of the *kula* bird. One may therefore wonder if, perhaps, rather than a colour *kula* might designate a quality, a

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said to be *karakarawa*, that is blue indeed (sky, sea), but it is also sometimes called *drokadroka* too, which would rather be green. Often, the two words seem quite interchangeable.

<sup>15</sup> Europeans would not have looked for beads specifically, at least not in the period under consideration, but some may have been integrated to precious objects. Thus, there is a quite famous ivory hook in Cambridge (CUMAA 1955:247), on the top of which stand two female figures, probably of Tongan making (Hooper 2006:248; Herle & Carreau 2013:55-56). Strings of blue, white and red beads, pass through the suspension hole, above the figures. The formal, material and contextual characteristics of this item, all designate a very special thing. Interestingly, the beads tend to magnify the visual effect of the twined figure. In contrast to their bright colours, the depth of the ivory's patina is indeed enhanced. This given, one must keep in mind that such a beaded string could be a posterior addition to the object, rather than an original attribute of it. This would require further investigation.

visual effect that one could translate “shimmering,” “shiny” or “bright” in English. All the things that are said to be *kula* are indeed “shiny” in opposition to “duller” things, more often said to be *damudamu*. If we extrapolate could blue beads have been preferred not only because they were blue, but because they were actually classified as *kula*?<sup>16</sup>

Historical accounts, museum collections and current practices all confirm the powerful significance of red in Fijian and Polynesian cultures. From the first encounters, red materials were popular among items of Western origin. In this, they followed a pre-existing demand for red things that explains many equivalences between imported and local materials. Among traditionally valued red things, feathers called *kula* in Fiji, *‘ura* in Tahiti, were transpolynesian valuables. They were closely associated with notions of *mana* and *tapu (tabu)*, and with chiefs and gods — or chiefly and godly qualities. They were used to mark the presence and status of the extraordinary throughout Polynesia — e.g. Samoan mats, Tahitian *to’o*, and Hawaiian cloaks, helmets and model temples (Kaepler et al. 1993:85-86; Kaepler 1978a:51ff.; Babadzan 1993). They were extensively traded between islands. In Western Polynesia, most *kula* feathers came from Fiji (Kaepler 1978b:252; Henderson 1931a:239). It becomes very interesting here because Cook, who had collected red feathers and red-feathered artefacts in Tonga, exchanged them in Tahiti for valuable things, including mourning costumes he had failed to acquire on his first voyage, when offering European things in exchange. This example tells us a lot about the potency and evolution of local value systems in Pacific-West exchanges.<sup>17</sup> It also proves that the British did not only find their place in pre-existing networks, using local value systems more or less consciously to obtain what they wanted, they also extended them.

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<sup>16</sup> My deep thanks go to Simonne Pauwels here, because it is from a conversation with her that I understood a possible link between shiny/bright and *kula*. I was desperately trying to explain my difficulty with the word in comparison with *damudamu* and enumerating things that were called one or the other. She suggested that *kula* might indeed be a quality. This is of much interest. This given, I still need to find consistency here. I now wonder for example why *tabua* that are smoked, polished and anointed so that their reddish patina is quite similar to that of the *bulikula* are said *tabuadamu*. Similarly, I remember wearing a very bright red top in Suva about which many people commented “Oi! Damudamu!” Further linguistic research would be needed to clarify this matter.

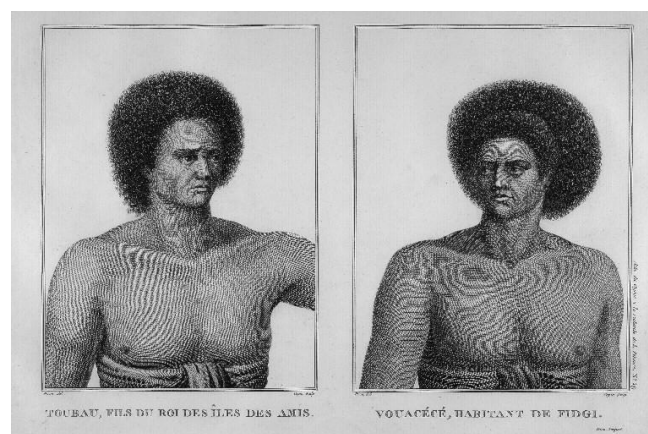
<sup>17</sup> Some valuables, like mourning costumes in Tahiti, had become accessible to Cook and his crew when they were not a few years before. Many factors could be enumerated here. They would include, local changes, material devaluations linked to contact with Westerners, the devaluation of the objects after they had been used, missionaries’ influence, etc. However, red feathers obviously played a great role (Cook 1784, II:10). They probably were the greatest valuable of the Society Islands. In this, they may be compared to Fijian *tabua*.

## *D'Entrecasteaux in Tonga (1793)*

### The Fijian physical type as it was seen by the Europeans

Apparently, the French only met with one Fijian man in 1793 in Tonga. They called him Vouacécé or Vouacecee. He had arrived soon after the French — in a period when the winds switch, allowing easier canoe travel from Fiji — and he frequently visited them. Like Cook, the French were influenced by the Tongans' depiction of their neighbours, including their war-related behaviour and cannibalism. Also, like Cook, they were quite amazed with their Fijian visitor (Labillardière 1800, II:171-172).

A portrait of Vouacécé (Fijian spelling could be Vuasisi or Vuasese) can be found in the Atlas of the voyage (Labillardière 1800, Atlas: pl.XXIX). The Fijianess of the young chief is obvious to anyone who has looked at other early accounts. Although the codes of Western representations applied, the engraving represents a man with an imposing stature and a typical Fijian coiffure from pre-Christian times. All accounts report the care Fijian men took of their head. D'Entrecasteaux's does as well and the portrait even suggests that Vouacécé may have worn a wig (*ulumate*), a traditional head cover for men of rank who, having undergone the mourning sacrifice of having their head shaved, needed to preserve their pride. Vouacécé also wears a band of *masi* barkcloth, knotted around his chest, a traditional way of dressing in Fiji and Tonga.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

2.18— “Toubau, fils du roi des îles des Amis” & “Vouacécé, Habitant de Figi”  
(Labillardière 1800: pl.XXIX)

For as far as we know, this is the first representation of a Fijian by a European artist. Like textual descriptions of physical types, and before tri-dimensional models and



relics (casts, skulls) such representations shaped the development of what we now call physical anthropology in Europe. In link with the observations of the scientific crews embarked on circumnavigations, and with the help of artists like Hodges and Webber who travelled with Cook, physical anthropology became a privileged way to observe non-Western people. In the late eighteenth century, its first steps were visually documented. It began to be theorized early in the nineteenth century, under the notable influence of French scholars from the *Société des observateurs de l'homme* (Copans & Jamin 1994). Among them, Joseph Marie de Gérando provided the first manual for anthropological fieldwork (1800), based on what we would now call “participant observation,” long before Malinowski (1922).

At d’Entrecasteaux’s time, the perception of human races was rather simple. In the Pacific, it was dual, as has been explained with Forster’s example. D’Entrecasteaux quoted his German predecessor to explain that, with the Fijian he had met in Tonga, he thought he had encountered the two races, as well as the two idioms that could be found in the South Seas (Entrecasteaux & Rossel 1808:313).

Here again, racial distinctions were completed with stereotypes on cannibal and non-cannibal people (Labillardière 1800, II:173-174). The French seem to have respected their Fijian guest a lot; so that his portrait gives him a quite “heroic” look (see Douglas 1999:74ff.). They described him as intelligent and curious, in spite of some suspicions about him being cannibal (*Ibid.*:173-174). Yet, Labillardière added:

“Unquestionably the reader will be astonished to hear, that, notwithstanding this mark of ferociousness, the arts are much farther advanced at Feejee than at the Friendly Islands; the inhabitants of which never failed to inform us that the finest articles they sold us came from Feejee, being careful to give us to understand that they were very decidedly Superior to those which they fabricated themselves.” (Labillardière 1800, II:173-174)

### Early material transformations

D’Entrecasteaux too mentioned connections between Tonga and Fiji. He highlighted linguistic differences between the archipelagos and remarked that Vouacécé spoke both languages — many islanders did. The crew gathered a few words of Fiji’s language. The account also shows that things exchanged between Whites and Islanders circulated between local partners too, notably between Fiji and Tonga. The sword on plate XXXIII has already been mentioned.



2.19— Dunkerque, Musée des Beaux Arts, n°Blazy 493

This trade of Western things by islanders is sometimes visible on indigenous objects; and they explain how the trade with Europeans modified local systems. Overall, Cook and d'Entrecasteaux collected quite similar things in Tonga, as far as we can judge from a few examples and a nearly twenty-year interval. They include combs, remarkable necklaces of bird bones and shells, mats, etc. (Kaeppler 1978a; Kaeppler 2009). Some mats, because they were made by Samoans, traded in Tonga and ornamented with Fijian parrot feathers (*kula*) provide a good example of Western Polynesian trading relations (Kaeppler 1978b). In Dunkerque, there is a mat (n°Blazy 493) attributed to d'Entrecasteaux's collection that, instead of feathers, has small shreds of European red material — perhaps wool. Progressively, wool replaced feathers on most mats and it is now extensively used in Western Polynesia, where craftswomen have become expert in making multi-coloured borders of wool (and acrylic fibres) of various patterns and qualities. This example might be one of the first where wool was used. It is quite small (85 centimetres long), but finely woven, and the wool has been inserted in the process of making, as feathers traditionally were. Such features designate a valuable artefact and provide us with a good example of how European materials were incorporated into traditional exchanged items as early as the late eighteenth century.

## Conclusion: founding encounters

Bentley's travel (1799) closes the series of eighteenth century encounters. After them, voyagers of various backgrounds visited the archipelago. Navy officers, merchants and missionaries built their own knowledge of Fiji upon these founding encounters. Cook, d'Entrecasteaux and Lapérouse, whom d'Entrecasteaux was in search of, imprinted a durable mark on the history of the Pacific and on Pacific-West relations. Most of their followers referred to them (e.g. Dumont d'Urville, Wilkes, Denham). To us, they are key references too. The collections they gathered, Fijian and Tongan, are unrivalled milestones to understand Fiji-West historical relations and Fiji's material culture.

## Chapter 3

# Traders and beachcombers (1800-1854)

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After the rather contingent and shallow encounters of the eighteenth century, European contacts with Fiji intensified at the beginning of the nineteenth century, once attention had been drawn to the commercial potential of Fijian natural resources. Between Western traders, beachcombers and Fijians, the range of tradable items progressively increased, including that of crucial valuables such as ivory and firearms on the one hand, and body ornaments, weapons and religious items on the other. This chapter examines the mechanisms at stake in such transactions. With particular attention to the collections of the Peabody Essex Museum of Salem, Massachusetts (PEM), it seeks information on the exchangeability of a number of Fijian artefacts. It also examines European trade items and their evolution, in order to reach a closer understanding of what was given in exchange for Fijian artefacts, under what circumstances and following which models. Some influences on Fijian material culture will be discussed, along with changes in local political relations between a number of chiefdoms involved in Fiji-West trading activities.

### Context

Sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer*, prized on Chinese markets, proliferated in Fiji in the early 1800s, as well as turtles whose shells were valued in both Asia and Europe. Sandalwood was used as incense in China, but was already an object of trade between Fiji and Tonga (Derrick 1957:39). *Bêche-de-mer* was eaten as a delicacy and for its remedial properties in China. This is a large sea cucumber or slug, scientifically named *Holothuria*. It was also called trepang by early voyagers, from the Malay *teripang*. Many alternative spellings can be found in the literature (e.g. trippang, beach-la-mar and biche-la-mar) (Derrick 1957:67-68). Several species were found in Fiji (Turbet 1942; Derrick 1957:68n; Cary 1998[1887]:65).

By attracting Western attention to such riches, the wreck of the *Argo* in 1800<sup>1</sup> marked a turn in Fiji-West relations (Derrick 1957:37-44; Im Thurn & Wharton

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<sup>1</sup> The exact date of this wreck is unclear (see Derrick 1957:37)

1925:xxxii-xxxvii). The Western traders who intended to procure such wealth started with few sailing directions, limited language knowledge and little but their predecessors' experience — not always positive — to help them in their decisions. Yet, many came and spent months, sometimes years, in Fiji. They established complex relations with islanders, in particular with chiefs, whom they seemed to consider as partners rather than as obstacles to their business, in contrast to subsequent attitudes (see Thomas 1989:49). Cross-cultural alliances were, however, fragile. A mixture of diplomacy, rivalry and treachery shaped these strategic partnerships.

These trading ventures can be split in two general periods. The *sandalwood period* came first, as brief as it was intense. During fifteen to twenty years (1800s-1820s) European traders focussed on the precious wood (*yasi*). They mainly procured it on Vanualevu where Bua, or “Sandalwood” Bay, became a major landfall. Vanualevu, and by extension the whole archipelago, became known as the “Sandalwood island(s).” When the wood became rare after about 1815, due to overexploitation, and the inhabitants hostile — for the same reason — Western visits to Fiji decreased (Routledge 1985:47). However, Westerners soon turned to *bêche-de-mer* (*dri*) and extended their scope to other parts of Fiji, including northern (e.g. Cakaudrove, Taveuni) and central regions (e.g. Lomaiviti, Bau, Ovalau).<sup>2</sup> The *bêche-de-mer period* lasted longer. To some extent it has not ended yet; but after a climax from the late 1820s to mid-1830s it slowed down (Levesque 2002:30). From the mid-nineteenth century it became a more marginal activity, while planting enterprises developed ashore. Alongside *yasi* and *dri*, turtle-shell was sought; a secondary although profitable trade.<sup>3</sup>

American sailors, most of them from New England, dominated the “Fiji trade” during the first half of the nineteenth century. British and Spanish merchants were present until 1815, followed by seafarers from the British colony of New South Wales (Port Jackson, now Sydney) and from Manila (Philippines). The French were rare visitors. Their quasi-absence can be related to the difficulties of the French Navy after Trafalgar, and to other resources the French preferably exploited (Poirier 2003). Other Europeans, including Russians, visited the archipelago; but they formed a small minority

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<sup>2</sup> *Bêche-de-mer* is mentioned before 1815 by Western visitors, but rarely, and its exploitation intensified when the possibilities of getting sandalwood shrank (Turbet 1942)

<sup>3</sup> Coconut oil has also been identified as a trading commodity of that time (e.g. Routledge 1985:51), but it was rarely described as a substantial source of income in historical documents.

(Barratt 1990). A few sailors remained on the islands, deliberately (deserters, ex-convicts) or accidentally (castaways). Those will generically be called beachcombers.

Whalers were another group that impacted Fiji-West relations, and Fijian material culture. Temporarily, they provided islanders and Western sailors with highly prized whale's teeth. Cachalots were little hunted in Fijian waters — and never by Fijians, though many islanders joined whaling ships as harpooners and crew. However, whale's teeth and other kinds of ivory circulated between Western crews. In 1833, for instance, John D. Winn reported the purchase of whale's teeth against cigars in New Zealand (Journal of the *Coral*, 1833-36, PMB Mf.206). In the early nineteenth century merchant ships transited through the Bay of Islands (New Zealand), or through Port Jackson (now Sydney, Australia). The routes consequently changed. More vessels sailed directly from New Zealand to Fiji in the first half of the nineteenth century, inaugurating new stopovers on their way. J.H. Eagleston, for example, recommended Ono-i-Lau as a landfall for ships coming from New Zealand in 1834. Such remarks had implications for local politics (Young 1982:31).

### Salem's collection

The representation of Fiji in Western museums increased proportionately with the intensification of contacts. This chapter is mainly based on the PEM's collection, and related documents. In Salem, the commerce of Fijian *dri* and turtle-shell was a major source of income, notably in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was placed under the leadership of Stephen C. Phillips, a wealthy ship owner who participated in the fortune of the city and of its museum. Phillips encouraged his employees to document their Pacific experiences by means of material and data "collecting." As a result, sailors brought back collections and journals to Salem (see Clunie 1982a).

Their manuscripts are now kept in the Phillips Library — part of the PEM. Merchants were usually reluctant to give information about their "gold mines." Yet, for the sake of their counterparts Salem sailors commented on their business in Fiji. They explained what was good to trade with the inhabitants and documented their daily life in the islands. Mention of artefacts now in the PEM is rare. However, when they can be associated with individuals, voyages or simply dates, these objects become key evidence of transactions between Fijians and Western traders, as well as precious examples of Fijian early material culture (1800s-1850s), detailed here and in the next chapter.

In 2009, the PEM's collection counted more than 600 catalogue numbers attributed to Fiji. This number excludes all barkcloths and a number of textiles, which could not be examined during this research for practical and conservation reasons. About 360 of the 600 artefacts surveyed could be related to early trading expeditions. Many could not be examined (see Preface), but related catalogue cards provided valuable data. Among these artefacts, about half were weapons. A third of the collection included tools such as fishing lines and adzes, dishes, including *yaqona* bowls, and other artefacts such as headrests, basketry and ceramics. A number of pieces in the latter category could also be regarded as religious items, but it is not our purpose to discuss such a classification here. One may, however, include miniature temples in this group (two specimens). Another category was body ornaments (e.g. necklaces, pendants and breastplates, wigs, combs). They represented a little over 15% of the early objects. Finally, less than two percent could be designated as samples (e.g. seed of sandalwood, teeth). This chapter will now examine some examples in detail, first chronologically and then thematically.

## Chronological examination of the PEM's early collection

### W.P. Richardson's collection (1810-12)

At the PEM, the sandalwood period is notably represented by items acquired in Fiji by William Putnam Richardson. From June 1810 to March 1812, Richardson was in command of the brig *Active*. In 1811, he visited Fiji for sandalwood, but the exact date of his stopover is unknown (Dodge 1972:186).

During this research, eight items, catalogued in Salem by 1812, were listed with a Richardson provenance (PEM E4828, E4866, E4875, E4880, E5057, E5063, E5064, E5072). All of them are clubs, either two-handed or throwing clubs. Here, throwing clubs appear as a new type of Fijian weapon represented in Western museums from the early 1810s, and thereafter available to Euro-American visitors to Fiji. Among Richardson's items, all throwing clubs (4) are *iula tavatava*. These are fluted clubs with distinctive flanges or serrations on the head (Clunie 2003b:143).

Throwing clubs will be described in the next chapter as personal items, closely associated with individuals, and as part of the dress of Fijian men from the first half of the nineteenth century (see also Clunie 2003b:136). Two items here discussed are explicitly associated with chiefly characters. E5057's card reads: "belonged to chief

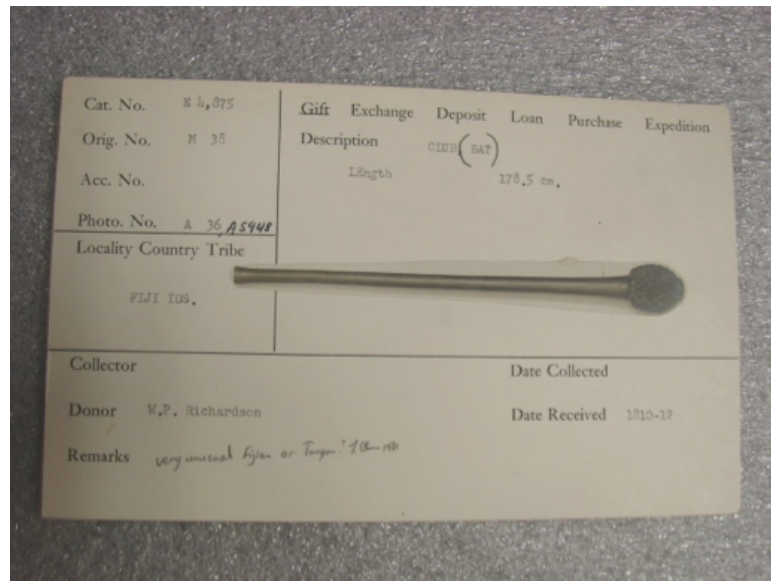
Becurbewallat of Kiteba;” and that of E5072 indicates: “belonged to chief Tankaye.” Although these names are difficult to track, due to time distance and approximate transcriptions, they can be associated with the western part of Vanualevu, where most sandalwood cargos were gathered and where Richardson is likely to have stopped.

Among the eight clubs enumerated above, only one appears carved at its grip — as far as can be judged from descriptions and pictures on catalogue cards. This decorated item is an *iula tavatava* too (E5053). In addition, one *bowai* club (E4880) seems to have two knots of *magimagi* in its lower part, to delimit its grip. This is a relatively long specimen (115cm in length), which, like a number of Fijian clubs, flares up toward its base. There is also a *gata waka* (E4866), i.e. a “rough cheeked [*gata*] club that [was] pounded into shape in the growing tree shrub with stones before the club was cut” (Clunie 2003b:105, fig.2d). This club is 101cm long and undecorated.

Richardson’s clubs also include one *totokia*, or battle hammer (E4828). According to the catalogue card, on which a picture is shown, this example has a rather thick beak and quite a small head — in comparison with later examples in museums. These attributes seem, however, bigger than those of the specimens described in chapter 2. Its volumes appear also more harmonious, and from the measurements and picture on the card, it has a relatively large section and appears quite stubby (93cm long).

Finally, one club in Richardson’s collection is unusual (E4875). It has a very long shaft (over 178cm), onto which a spherical head, covered with small conical projections, seems to have been embedded. A note in pencil on the card, by Fergus Clunie (May 1982), questions its Fijian provenance. The shaft of this item is smooth and flares up toward its end.





3.1— PEM, catalogue card of E4875

### Vanderford's and other collections from the 1820s

Among the PEM's early Fijian collection, the 1820s are better represented than the 1810s. This is logical, given the increase in Salem ships visiting Fiji in the 1820s in search of sandalwood and bêche-de-mer.

The biggest ensemble from this period at the PEM is associated with Benjamin Vanderford. This trader commanded the ship *Roscoe*, from 1821 to 1823. In 1822, Vanderford and his men spent several months in Fiji, mainly at Bua Bay, where they hoped to gather a cargo of sandalwood. According to Clunie, it was Vanderford who first noticed the commercial potential of Fijian bêche-de-mer (Levesque 2002:34). In his journal, Vanderford noted and studied the presence of sea-slug around Bua (Vanderford 1821-23: 9th April 1822). The items identified in 2009 as part of his collection consisted in twenty-one catalogue numbers, most of them received by the Essex Institute (EI, the forerunner of PEM) in 1823 — shortly after the *Roscoe* had returned to Salem. Almost half of them are clubs. The rest comprise one piece of native cordage (E4072), one bowl for *yaqona* (*kava*) (E5092), a few seeds of sandalwood (E5203) and a number of body ornaments, discussed below.



3.2— PEM, catalogue card of E5108

Most clubs correspond to previously described types. For instance, there is a short *totokia* club (88 cm), with a thick beak and a relatively small head (E4835). There are also four *cali* clubs, two of them having been received by the EI before 1821 (E5104, E5106). There are also one *vunikau* (E4809) or root club (Clunie 2003b:fig.14-15), one *gata* (E4868) and two *gadi* (E4796, E4882). *Gadi* are long straight-shafted pole clubs (*Ibid.*:fig.10-11). More striking is the presence of a quite large *kinikini* (E5108). Clunie described such clubs as chief's or priest's artefacts (*Ibid.*:127). This specimen is over 122 centimetres long and 32 centimetres broad. The picture on the catalogue card shows strips of vegetable fibres, most likely from pandanus leaves (*voivoi*), at the top and bottom of its shaft. This kind of rather ephemeral ornamentation is also visible on the *gata* (E4868). The latter is carved on its grip too, like the *vunikau* specimen (E4809). Yet, here a new form of décor appears; the *cali* E4869 has its shaft entirely wrapped in what looks like fine cords of braided *magimagi* (coir sennit) of several shades. Such clubs are qualified as *vividrasa* by Clunie, and presented the double asset of “a very attractive appearance” and “a firmly practical gripping surface for the warrior's sweaty hands” (2003b:99). As explained below and in the next chapter, in museum collections this type of Fijian ornamentation is quite frequent on clubs from the 1830s and 1840s.

Another club in Vanderford's collection is heavily decorated. This is the *gadi* (E4796). Its surface is entirely carved, and at intervals it is inlaid with ivory. However, the provenance of this item is uncertain, as will be discussed in the next section. Finally, one throwing was regarded as Vanderford's in 2009. This is a *iula kitu*, i.e. “a popular type of throwing club [whose] head is shaped like a small waterpot or coconut container called *kitu*...” (Clunie 2003b:142, fig.20-d). This specimen does not possess any special decoration.

The *yaqona* bowl mentioned above (E5092) has an elongated shape. It might be called *bavelo*, in comparison with “a small canoe made from a single log” (Capell 1941:8). According to the catalogue card, this specimen measures approximately 42.5 x 33 centimetres and is 11.5 centimetres high. Artefacts of similar shape were acquired from the late eighteenth century in Tonga (Kaeppler 1978a:228; Labillardière 1800, II: pl.XXXI n°9).

In terms of body ornament, Vanderford’s collection includes one comb. This one appears to be a typical *iseru sasa*, described by Clunie in May 1982 as a “composite hair ornament comb of coconut leaflet midribs (*sasa*) bound together with single strand coconut husk fibre...” (PEM catalogue card). One necklace (E5161) is made of small conical grey shells, strung onto a quite rigid vegetable fibre. There are also three armlets made of sections of *trochus* shells. These are called *qato* and quite common in museum collections from Fiji, including early ones. One of these bracelets was acquired before 1821 (E5194), the two others are dated 1823 (E5185).



3.3— PEM, E5161

Finally, there are two breastplates made of *civa* pearl-shell in Vanderford’s collection. Their presence here tends to attest a significant change in their exchangeability since Bligh’s first notice of similar items at Moce in 1792 (chapter 2). These artefacts will be further described and discussed in the next section. There is also a *saunidaliga*, i.e. an ear ornament associated with mourning sacrifices and other religious procedures (Clunie 1979). This item is made of what resembles a hollow tubular piece of shell. In May 1982, Clunie wrote on its catalogue card: “ornament worn through lobe of ear — by both sexes. Every Fijian was required by religion to have the ear lobe pierced & expanded for a plug. Extremely rare type” (see also Clunie

1982a:fig.D). Such ornaments and their functions will be further discussed in chapter 5. For now, the three latter items seem to demonstrate that Vanderford, who spent several months in Fiji in a leading position, had access to culturally significant artefacts that hitherto had been excluded from exchanges with Westerners.

Other donors to the PEM illustrate Fiji-West exchanges in the 1820s. A number of artefacts were recorded as being given to the EI between 1821 and 1831. In 2009, ten of them could be associated with J. Kinsman, who commanded the brig *Quill* when she visited Fiji for bêche-de-mer and turtle-shell in 1829 (Cary 1998[1887]:74-80). All of these, are body ornaments, with the exception of a piece of cordage for fishing nets (E5385) and one sail needle, *saulaca*, apparently made of a human bone (E5261). Such needles will be further discussed in chapter 5 (see also Spennemann 1986). Yet, the early entrance of this specimen in a Western museum is worth notice, for it seems that this artefact was accessioned in 1823. On the associated catalogue card, Clunie wrote: “needle for sewing together sections of mat canoe sails, made from shinbone (typically) of an enemy who had been cooked and eaten.” The association of *saulaca* with Fijian cannibal practices suggests that such an item had a *tabu* dimension, as well as a real impact on Western imaginaries. Unfortunately, no further information was found about the context of its acquisition.

Most other items associated with Kinsman are necklaces, apart from a pair of arm ornaments made of a kind of vine and quite frequent in Fijian collections from the period under consideration.<sup>4</sup>



3.4—PEM, E5177

3.5— NMNH, E3167

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, two specimens under n°E3167 from the US Exploring Expedition collection in the Smithsonian Institution. These include one faceted glass bead each; see Clunie 1982a:fig.D.

The majority of Kinsman's necklaces are made of tiny conical shells (less than a centimetre long) and of various shades (E5155; E5156; E5166; E5202; E5204; E5205). One (E5206), however, contrasts with the others. This is a necklace made of a braided cord in vegetable fibres — possibly *roga* (*Pipturus argenteus*), found on prestigious Fijian ornaments (Clunie 2003a:fig.105). Two rows of pink olive shells (*Olividae*) are attached to this cord at short intervals, which creates an impression of density and fluidity at the same time.



3.6— PEM, E5206

Other pieces, registered between 1821 and 1831, are attributed to Samuel Edgerly. Unfortunately, no information was found on this individual during this research. These artefacts are all clubs, including one undecorated *bowai* (E4798), one *cali vividrasa* (E4871) and four throwing clubs — either *iula tavatava* (E5062, E5067, E5070) or *iula kitu* (E5065). With the exception of E5070, for which the photograph on the card is unclear, all these *iula* are carved at the grip. E5067 is especially interesting for it belongs to a rare type of *iula tavatava*. It has two rows of pointed projections, at the top and lower part of the head, framing the main flanges. The latter appear smaller than on most *iula tavatava* from the early nineteenth century, and they are themselves carved with a central protuberance. There is a crack at the top of the shaft, just below the head. There, a series of small carved dots can be observed. These are likely to represent counting marks for ritual nights, marked after various events in Fiji (birth, death). The *tavatava* or zigzag patterns of the grip are typical *relievo* carvings, frequent on Fijian early clubs. The bottom of this item is flat, and its head quite small (about 8cm in diameter). Its total length is 44.5cm.





### 3.7— PEM, E5067

Between 1821 and 1831, Captain John Hammond also provided a *vunikau*, decorated with strips of pandanus and other fibres (E4823), as well as an *iula tavatava* carved at its grip (E5069).

Two *isala* (E5289-90) — turbans made of fine white barkcloth — and one feathered headband (E5287) were also received by the EI between 1821 and 1831, but these are not associated with any collector. By chance, they are similar to objects found in contemporaneous collections, discussed in chapter 4.

Among other collections from the 1820s, B.F. Johnson gave a *bowai* that is carved at its grip (E4801), and Deland furnished another one, undecorated (E4799). These donors have not yet been identified. Two other clubs, received in 1896, are said to have been collected by N.L. Rogers around 1825. This information is not verifiable, but the two clubs, one *gata* carved with circular patterns at intervals (E3320) and one *totokia* carved at its head and grip (E3321), seem more recent in comparison with other museum items.

According to one catalogue card, in 1826 “Mr. Gerry” donated a surprising *iula gasau* (E4873). On this card, Clunie wrote: “probably the rarest of Fijian throwing clubs. The name suggests it is modelled after the throwing dart used in the *tiqa* game, as does its shape” (see also Clunie 2003b:143, fig.21i-j). In addition of its belonging to such a rare type, this item has an entirely carved surface, partitioned in several registers in which *tavatava* and hatching patterns alternate. Yet, the carving technique, in *graffito* (?), might rather suggest a Tongan origin, which would also match the period of acquisition better. This is a quite big club (almost 55 centimetres in length and 5.4 centimetres of diameter at the head).



3.8— PEM, E4873 and details

Finally, two unattributed pieces are said to have arrived at the EI between 1827 and 1829, and one *matakilagi* handle of walrus ivory seems to have been catalogued at the EI before 1831 (E46995, this will be discussed below). The two former pieces are a *kali* headrest of a rare type (E3207) and a *gugu* club (E5101). The *kali* has three legs, being made of one curved piece of wood to which a pair of legs is attached. The main piece is flat at one extremity and carved in the shape of an oval foot at the other. The flat end is attached to the pair of legs, the top of which has the shape of a horse-shoe. *Gugu* clubs, also called *siriti*, have been described by Clunie as dancing and ceremonial weapons (2003b:110, fig.4c-f). Thus, the presence of E5101 in the PEM's early collection completes our current list of Fijian clubs accessible to Western visitors in the 1820s.

### Eagleston's and other collection from the 1830s

The biggest ensemble of Fijian items at the PEM, dating to the 1830s, can be associated with John Henry Eagleston. These artefacts were given to the EI between 1831 and 1840, the majority of them before 1835. A number were actually donated by Stephen C. Phillips in 1832. Because of the closeness between Eagleston and Phillips, to the point

that Eagleston named the chief Cokanauto of Rewa “Phillips” in homage to his employer (Eagleston 1834), Clunie has suggested that most artefacts given by Phillips could have been acquired by Eagleston between 1831 and 1840 — his years of activity in Fiji (see notes on PEM’s catalogue cards, and Clunie 1982a). Eagleston is known for his command of the ships *Peru* (1830-33), *Emerald* (1833-36) and *Mermaid* (1836-37), trading for bêche-de-mer and turtle-shell. Eagleston’s men can also be associated with these early acquisitions.

As far as the PEM’s collection shows, the range of items accessible to Westerners in the 1830s was broader than before. The items identified in 2009 comprised a number of clubs — but less than half of the total — as well as various body ornaments, tools and objects that can be described as religious items.

Among the clubs, there is a large *kinikini*, measuring 124 x 45cm (E4874), and donated by Phillips in 1832. There are also a few *vividrasa* clubs, including E4870, a *cali vividrasa* given by S. Barton to the EI in 1834, and E4808, a *vunikau vividrasa* donated by Phillips in 1832. One *iula tavatava*, also from S. Barton, has a human tooth at the base of its head, and a piece of ivory, perhaps walrus ivory, on the side of its top button (E5073). Such embedded pieces are likely to have added to the club’s value and prestige, and probably to its efficacy (*mana*). In museum records, teeth like these are often said to come from defeated — and cannibalised — enemies. Also, it seems that in early Fiji, a mythical association existed between human teeth and other forms of ivory, notably whale ivory (Thomas 1991:69-70, Sahlins 1983:72-73). In any event, this item must have been quite highly valued in the early 1830s.





3.9— PEM, E5073 and details

Another *iula tavatava*, which seems quite old, shows a roughly embedded piece of ivory at its button (E19452). However, it seems that this artefact reached the PEM much later, in 1926, via John H. Cheener.

Some clubs that may be dated to the 1830s are wrapped in *magimagi* (coconut coir sennit) and shell beads (E5111-12, and E4807 from S.C. Phillips). These items will be further discussed below, with regards to their material and symbolic value. Most other clubs from this period are carved at their grips or decorated by other means (e.g. strips of pandanus).

Among the body ornaments, Eagleston's and other 1830s' collections contain some wigs (*ulumate*) (E5086, E5021), *liku* skirts (E5372, E5374), combs (E5150, E5153, E5167, E5170), *imilamila* hair pins or scratchers (E5145, E5147) and one unique necklace made of pearl-shell and vegetable fibres (E5164) that will be discussed below.

One *ulumate* (E5021) is directly associated with Eagleston, with a late date of donation (1839). From the card, it is described as a "woven stiff framework of palm leaf covered with black and light brown kinky hair." Such artefacts were worn after mourning sacrifices, with religious implications. They will be further discussed in chapter 5. This wig was probably obtained during Eagleston's last voyage (1836-37). Along with other examples discussed in chapter 5, it allows us to date their alienability

to the second part of the 1830s, at the earliest. In comparison, other artefacts from the PEM can be dated from about the same period, or later, including E5020. This *ulumate* was described as made of a “net of braided sennit covered with tightly curved grey-brown hair” (PEM’s catalogue card). Another one (E5086) shows typical *tobe* ringlets at its back. On the associated catalogue card, Clunie wrote:

“Human hair wig, worn by the prematurely bald or by a man whose hair was growing back after being shaved off in mourning. Also worn by foreigners serving in Fijian armies as part of their disguise. The tails are *tobe* — ornamental ringlets grown at the back of the head or at the temples by both men and women. In women they signified unmarried state, purely ornamental in men.”<sup>5</sup> (Clunie, May 1982, PEM catalogue card)

The suggested date of acquisition for this artefact is “circa 1830?” (PEM’s catalogue card), but this cannot be verified.

Two *liku* skirts are attributed to Eagleston, without further date of donation (E5372, E5374). From the catalogue cards, they seem to be typical *liku* skirts made of *vau* (inner bark of the *Hibiscus*), with several layers expertly superposed. As the next chapter will explain, these are common in Fijian early collections from the 1830s.

Combs from the PEM’s 1830s collection are of two kinds: *iseru sasa*, made of midribs of coconut leaves (*sasa*) bound together by the mean of single strands of coconut husk fibre, and *iseru balabala*, made of sticks of treefern (*balabala*) wood and attached in the same way. The main difference is that the *sasa* were usually left natural, while *balabala* sticks were darkened so that they contrasted strongly with the natural coppery colour of *magimagi* lashings. On *iseru sasa*, on the contrary, the *magimagi* strand was often dyed in black, entirely or partially. The latter type may be compared to Tongan specimens, accessible to Westerners since the late eighteenth century (Kaepler 1978a:21, fig.427; Labillardière 1800, II: pl.XXXII n°21). The PEM’s collection includes at least two *iseru sasa* (E5153, E5167), and two *iseru balabala* from the 1830s (E5150, E5170). E5167 has a decorative strip of blackened *magimagi* in the middle of its lashed part. E5150 is indicated as having been donated in 1801, but as Clunie noticed this date is “suspiciously early” (see also Clunie 1982a:fig.F). By comparison with other specimens, it could rather be dated from the second half of the 1830s or from the early 1840s (see next chapter). E5170, is topped with a small bone, split in its length to fit the comb. This unusual composition gives it the allure of a small *burekalou* temple. This artefact will be illustrated and further discussed in chapter 4.

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<sup>5</sup> In February 1982, Clunie associated *tobe* ringlets with distinguished male status (Clunie 1982b:3).



### 3.10— PEM, E5150

Among other items, not discussed so far but which seem to have become accessible to Westerners, *imilamila* are of two types at the PEM. Some are long wooden sticks (E5145); the others are made of turtle-shell (previously E5147). The use of the latter material will be specifically discussed below. These artefacts, considered highly significant, culturally speaking, were exchanged with the Fiji Museum for pottery shreds in the early 1980s. They are now catalogued 81.346 and 81.347 at the FM. They were discussed by Clunie in 1986 (2003a:78, fig.78-79).

Eagleston's collection also includes one *kali*, given to the EI by Phillips in 1832 (E3205), and one *tanoa* or rounded *yaqona* bowl, similar to specimens in use in Tonga and most likely made in eastern Fiji (E5094). The latter item was received from Eagleston in 1833, and from the picture on the catalogue card it retains its *watabu*, or sacred cord. This was — and still is — unrolled and directed toward the person of highest rank, or toward the most valued guest, during *yaqona* ceremonies (Clunie 2003a:118-119, fig.144). Eagleston's collection also counts one cooking pot (*kuro*) and three stands (*sue*), probably associated with it (E5082-85). The latter items bear testimony to a certain documentation endeavour, and illustrate Eagleston's acquaintance with Fijian daily objects. They were given by him to the EI in 1835.

Some objects with a greater significance due to their material and functional features will not be discussed here but need to be mentioned. In 1832 Phillips gave a spade with a wooden shaft and a turtle-shell blade (E4887). In 1835, Captain Winn offered a miniature temple (*burekalou*) with two roofs (E5037); and another *burekalou*, single-roofed, also exist in the collection (E5038). These items will be discussed below.

Finally, it is worthy of notice that "J.B. Knight," probably John B. Knights of the brig *Spy* (Knights 1832-33), gave another *saulaca* to the EI in 1834. This item seems to be of human bone and is similar to the example previously mentioned.



3.11— PEM, E5260

### Wallis's collection (1830-52)

The collection at the PEM that is the most representative of the later part of our pre-1855 focus is that of Benjamin Wallis. Wallis was a *bêche-de-mer* trader, active in the Pacific from about 1830 to 1852. His collections reached the PEM via the heirs of George Swan, in 1952 (accession n°12762). The catalogue numbers of these items are consequently much bigger than those of other items discussed here, from at least E30489 to E30547. In 2009, twenty-six of these catalogue numbers were associated with Fiji. Wallis is mostly known in the literature by the book of his wife, Mary, who travelled with him on several trips to Fiji (Wallis 1851).

Wallis's Fijian collection comprises a minority of clubs and a number of items not yet encountered. Among these, there are three belts made of woven strips of pandanus (*voivoi*), some natural and the others darkened (E30492-94). These belts are quite similar to one associated with Dumont d'Urville's second voyage (1837-40) and now kept in La Rochelle (H.3397, see Leclerc 2008, II:371). They also remind us of chequered sheaths of pandanus that sometimes adorn clubs from the same period, notably *gugu* and *kiakavo* dance clubs (see chapter 4 and Clunie 2003b:104, fig.1c).



3.12— PEM, E30492

Wallis's collection also includes a mat, unfortunately not examined in 2009 (E30506). In addition, it comprises two bamboo nose flutes (*bituucu*, E30523, E30528). Their scratched and burnt décor is typical of this kind of musical instrument, found in Fijian early collections from the late 1830s.



3.13— PEM, E30523

E50544 appears to be a child's club, for it only measures 57 centimetres in length. Clunie described it as a "*waka kiakavo* — boy's club" (PEM's catalogue card). Adult-sized *kiakavo* were dancing or ceremonial clubs (Clunie 2003b:fig.1a-c). Smaller items like this one were used to trained male children, especially chiefly infants (Clunie 2003a:149; 2003b:136).

The Wallis collection also includes one headrest (*kali*), large enough for two people (91 cm). Clunie confirmed this use on the catalogue card (E30536). More surprising, E50357 appears to be a *kalimasi vonotabua*, i.e. a wooden headrest made of a bar to which two set of legs are fitted by means of *magimagi* and inlaid with ivory. On the catalogue card, Clunie wrote: "v. good example of *kali* inlaid with ivory — inlays work of Tongan canoe builders." This is one of the rare items in the PEM's early collection that includes ivory. Unfortunately, none of these headrests could be examined in 2009.

Speaking of ivory, one item may attract attention. E30530 is a small whale's tooth. However, this tooth cannot be regarded as an artefact, rather as a zoological specimen. In Fijian it would be called *batinitavuto* — literally sperm whale's tooth. Wallis's collection also contains some dried *bêche-de-mer* pieces (E30532-33).

There is an armlet (E30515), very close in shape to the vine items described previously, although this one is made of braided *magimagi*, which Clunie considered very rare (1982a: fig.D). Wallis's body ornaments also comprise one wig (E30489), one necklace (E30509) and one *iseru sasa* (E30525). The two latter are decorated with tiny

glass beads and will therefore be discussed in the next section. More common ornaments include one armband (*qato*) made of a shell section (E30531) and one ornament made of brown vegetable fibres that resembles a small *liku* (E30508). This one is comparable to a piece in the U.S. Exploring Expedition's collection (SI, E3259). That is an armlet made of black and red *vau* (*Hibiscus*), probably used as a dancing ornament. In the PEM's catalogue card, E30508 is described as a necklace. In 1982, Clunie also illustrated a small *liku* (*likunigone*) "collected by Benjamin Wallis prior to 1853." Traditionally, such items were "worn by untattooed girls of chiefly rank" (Clunie 1982a: fig.A). Unfortunately, this item was not seen in 2009.



3.14— PEM, E30515

The Wallis collection also includes one *iroi* or flywhisk (E30538). Such items are rare in Fijian early museum collections, while frequent in colonial or Tongan ones. All clubs attributed to Wallis show either a carved décor, notably at their grip, or a *vividrasa* ornamented shaft (E30540-46).

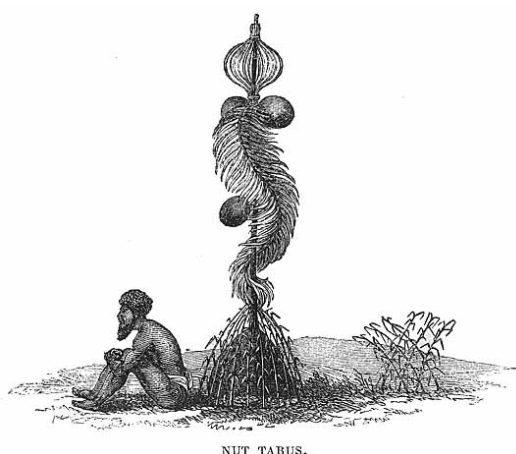
Finally, two items must be discussed in more detail. They consist in coconuts from which half of the husk was taken off, so that their larger part is exposed and their eyed part hidden. A length of a twisted coir line is attached around nut, at the junction with husk (E30529, E30547). On the catalogue card of E30529, Clunie wrote "perhaps coconut *tabu* symbol?? If Fijian at all." In 2009, only E30547 was examined.





3.15— PEM, E30547

In Fiji, as elsewhere in the Pacific, coconut trees and parts were — and still are — attributed special values. Early observers noticed that coconuts, and coconut palms, were used as *tabu* markers by Fijians (see Williams 1982:235), as well as for other “magic” purposes. For example, in late 1829, Bays described the “old chief” of Vatoa using a coconut to make an “incantation” for the safety of the castaway Westerners departing for Tonga (1831:67). *Tabu* elements such as the above artefacts are rare in museum collections. Perishable and unspectacular, visually speaking, they rarely caught the collectors’ attention. They might, however, be regarded as highly significant, culturally speaking, and they raise the question of their acquisition.



3.16— “Nut tabus” (Williams 1982:235)

The PEM’s Fijian collection also includes what looks like a roof of a miniature *burekalou*. In comparison with previously mentioned items, this one is entirely covered with white and black sea-snail shells (E4713). This example will be further discussed in chapter 4, with reference to comparable specimens covered with seeds. In general, the latter part of the PEM’s pre-1855 collection, discussed in this section and in the previous

one, will benefit from comparisons with contemporaneous collections gathered in Fiji by the Navy officers engaged in surveying the islands (chapter 4).

## Thematic examination of the PEM's collection

### Rarity of ivory

The preceding has shown that few ivory-made objects are found in the earliest collections at the PEM. Nevertheless, it is clear that whale ivory — the teeth of the sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*) — were highly valued in Fiji even before the arrival of European traders and whalers, and the importation of massive quantities. All the early traders note the intense interest shown by Fijians in obtaining whale's teeth, called *tabua* when they were (and still are) used in ceremonial presentations, pierced at each end for attaching a coconut fibre or pandanus leaf cord. Hooper (2103) and Clunie (2013) are just publishing comprehensive essays on whale's teeth in Fiji and Tonga, emphasising their connection with, and equivalence to, chiefly and godly power. However, the important point for our purposes here is that whale's teeth were regarded as great valuables (*iyau*) by Fijians, and for most of the first half of the nineteenth century they moved only in one direction, from Westerners to Fijians. *Tabua* and ivory-made objects remained largely inaccessible to Whites. Towards the middle of the century, and after, items made of ivory were increasingly alienated to Western collectors, but for most of the period covered by this thesis, few were collected. This allows us to assess the changing and relative value of whale ivory in Fijian culture.



3.17— PEM, E46995



Among the earliest examples of ivory artefacts examined during this research, there was an interesting piece of walrus ivory (PEM E46995). Clunie (1982a) suggested, it might have been the handle of a chiefly staff (*matakilagi*) rather than a piece of a walking stick (*ititoko*).<sup>6</sup> In a note on the catalogue card, Clunie drew attention to the rarity of such articles in museums. Yet, Captain Kinsman of the *Quill* donated it to the Essex Institute (EI) before 1831. Sometimes, *ititoko* have ivory handles, but these are usually made of sperm whale's teeth, polished and coloured like *tabua* (e.g. FM 85.46; FM 70.5). The general shape of this handle is unusual. Rounded disks at intervals and a bulbous top give it a rather Asian aspect, while the walrus ivory suggests an Arctic provenance. Both these hypothetical provenances are contradicted by *tavatava* (or zigzag) carving, typical of Fijian work.

Walrus ivory is quite easy to identify. Its inner structure differs from that of whale's teeth, as well as its sonority and aspect. In surface, it is usually duller than whale ivory and can sometimes be taken for bone. Walrus tusks were occasionally used *in extenso* on Fijian artefacts, in headrests (*kalitabua*) (e.g. FM 55.22, in Clunie 1986, fig.66) or as large chiefly *tabua* (FM 83.44 & 83.45). Salem's handle may suggest that walrus ivory was less valued by Fijians than other types, but this is unlikely (Clunie, personal communication, June 2013). That would have explained an early alienability, in contrast to other ivory artefacts of Fijian manufacture. However, the presence of this artefact in the PEM's collection also highlights an American taste for such objects. One should not forget that ivory was valued in America and Europe too. So perhaps it was an expensive purchase from the captain of the *Quill*, or a highly prestigious gift he received. Another possibility would be an act of "negative reciprocity" (Sahlins 1972:195). Unfortunately, no further information on the circumstance of the handle's acquisition has yet been found.

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<sup>6</sup> *iTitoko* canes may be later artefacts. They could very well appear as an evolution of chiefly symbols such as *matakilagi*, inspired from European walking sticks. *iTitoko* are quite numerous in colonial collections (e.g. Fiji Museum), but absent from all pre-1855 collections examined during this work.

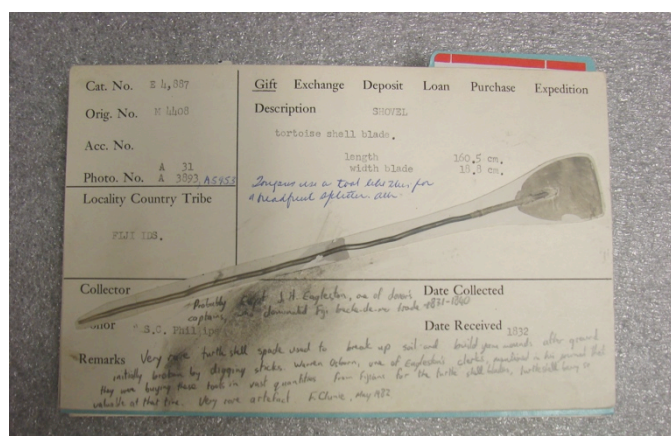
## Changes in value: Fijian material culture of the early 1800s in Salem's collection

The documentary value of Salem's collection does not need further demonstration. In terms of size and quality it has no equivalent for Fiji in the early 1800s, and it is also unique when it comes to traders' collections. Among other specificities, it illustrates transformations in the content of early collections from Fiji. Key materials of Fiji's art-history are represented at the PEM. In addition to ivory, turtle-shell, pearl-shell and beads are of particular interest, pointing out fundamental evolutions in Fijian value systems and highlighting early changes in Fiji's material culture.

### *Turtle-shell*

Western traders sought turtle-shell eagerly. Except for edge pieces that they could exchange against more beneficial trade items, such as whale's teeth in Rotuma (Osborn 1833-35), they bought as much as they could, including manufactured items, for commercial purposes. Fijian crafts including turtle-shell are consequently little represented in museum collections. At the PEM, there is a spade with a turtle-shell blade (E4887) that was not available to be seen in August 2009. However, the catalogue card and its black-and-white picture leave little doubt about its authenticity. It was given to the EI in 1832 by S.C. Phillips and is therefore likely to have been acquired during one of Eagleston's voyages (see above). Clunie described it (see also Clunie 1982a: fig.C):

"Very rare turtle shell spade used to break up soil and build yam mounds after ground initially broken by digging sticks. Warren Osborn, one of Eagleston's clerks, mentions in his journal that they were buying these tools in vast quantities from Fijians for the turtle shell blades, turtle shell being so valuable at that time. Very rare artefact." (PEM's catalogue card)



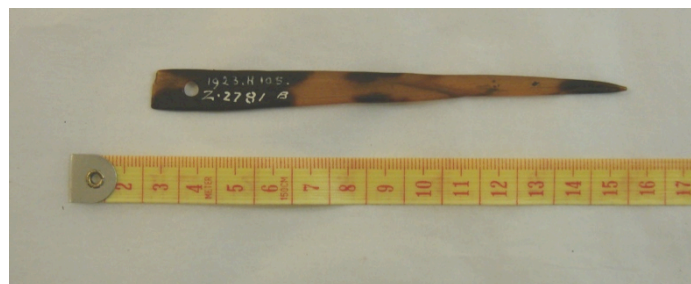
3.18— PEM, catalogue card of E4887

Osborn's journal of the *Emerald* (Captain Eagleston) mentions such implements. In June 1834, Osborn was at "Buteck" (Batiki?), an island he described as known for the manufacture of oil and mats. There the "Laskow" (Lasakau?) people bought "little shells" (i.e. turtle-shells) they carried to "Bowe" (Bau). He "got a few shovel and toe pieces here" (Osborn 1833-35). Osborn also mentioned rings made of turtle-shell, which he said Fijians wore on their fingers (*Ibid.*). Another journal from the same trip points out the decline of turtle-shell artefacts in Fiji:

"The Fegee formerly made shovels of their shell, but this practice is getting out of fashion since they have found the Whites pay such a price for it, these are out of the thickest & best shell we have about 26 lbs of them" (Cheever 1833).

Due to the symbolic value of turtles in Fiji, already discussed in chapter 2, it is probable that the local significance of such spades exceeded that of simple agricultural tools. Their role in growing root crops must have had a special meaning. Tubercles were, like elsewhere in the Pacific, a major part of Fijian alimentation. They still structure Fijian meals today, being *kakana dina* or "true" food, while supplementary ingredients are considered relish or *coi* (Ravuvu 1983:32-34). Root crops were also celebrated in first fruits ceremonies (*isevu*), where they were ritually presented to chiefs and priests (Lawrie 1912, Hocart 1927a:189-190) — now to the church.

The use of turtle-shell in a decisive step of the yam growing was probably not random. It was perhaps a way to confer some extra-efficiency (*mana*) to the soil and plants, like human bones carved into needles (*saulaca*) communicated some extra-*mana* to the sails of canoes (Spennemann 1986). It seems that turtle-shell needles could have existed too, but little is known about such items (e.g. CUMAA Z\_2781\_B/1923.H105). The equivalence already suggested between turtles and human beings (chapter 2) could hence also apply to human bone and turtle-shell.



3.19— CUMAA, Z\_2781\_B

Despite such effects, possibly attributed to turtle-shell and objects made of it, it seems that Fijians were ready to “sacrifice” them by the 1830s in exchange for firearms and other valuables. Apart from the decisive role of firearms, this underlines the flexibility and changeability of Fijian value systems. Later collections include spades too, but those are made of shells (large clam or oyster shells). The resemblance of some of these shells, once polished, with turtle-shell must be noticed. Both materials share their sea provenance, colour and to some extent their transparency, in addition to sharp edges (e.g. MQB 72.53.446-447).



3.20— MQB, 72.53.446



3.21— MQB, 72.53.447

### *Shells and imported materials*

Many kinds of shells were valued in early Fiji, including oysters (*civa*) and clams (*vasua*). Many survive in museums as body ornaments. More exceptionally they decorated buildings and other objects of distinguished status. Decorative shells were mostly white cowries (*bulivula/bulidina*). From the 1820s, however, it seems that shells suffered from the arrival of newly imported materials, including ivory, glass beads and metal. This devaluation can be measured through their availability for American sailors. With reference to a few PEM specimens, visual and functional resemblances can be stressed between traditional and imported materials.

## Shell and glass beads

Glass beads were among the first items traded between White men and Pacific islanders (see chapter 2). They reached Fiji early and must have spread quickly. Yet, they are rare in museum early collections, becoming more frequent from the 1830s onwards. At the PEM, a few early objects comprise *shell* beads. These look like they have been made from a kind of white *Tridacna* clam (*vasua*) or from *Trochus* (*sici*) shells. In museum collections, shell beads follow, it seems, an opposite trend to those of glass. Found in early times, they are quite rare in collections from the twentieth century, except for objects imported from other archipelagos (e.g. Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Samoa). They may therefore be regarded as important chronological markers to distinguish early artefacts from later ones. The PEM's specimens help us to understand their role and use on early pieces, in comparison with glass beads and other precious materials such as ivory and *magimagi* (coconut coir sennit).



3.22— PEM, E4807 (and detail)

Most artefacts that include shell discs in the PEM's Fijian collection are weapons. In 2009, three clubs and two spears were examined, largely covered with shell beads. The best documented club (E4807) may also be the earliest — as far one can tell from the museum records. Like the turtle-shell spade, it was given to the EI by Phillips in 1832 and Clunie thought it must be related to Eagleston's voyages. It is a *vunikau* or *waka*, i.e. a two-handed club carved from the lower part of a *nokonoko* tree. Where the roots used to stem there are knobs on the head of the club, the *waka* type being more regular in its volumes than the *vunikau* (Clunie 2003b:fig.14-16). This specimen is *entirely* covered with *magimagi* cords, into which shell beads are intricately knotted.

These beads have a quite rough, though regular, appearance. They measure c. 5-10mm in diameter and are approximately 2mm thick. The time involved in their making must have been considerable, as well as that of their insertion into the *magimagi* cord — dense and precise.

Such a patient enterprise, as often observed in Pacific arts (e.g. Hawaiian cloaks, feather money from the Santa Cruz Islands or even barkcloths), must have served a particular purpose (Kaeppler *et al.* 1993:83-91). It probably indicated a special status or *tabu*. Wrapping and binding, notably in coconut sennit, has been described as highly significant (Jessop 2007; Küchler 1999; Gell 1993). In Fiji, things ornamented with *magimagi* (*burekalou*, *tabua*) or made of it (miniature *burekalou*) were considered extraordinary, and the shell beads must have emphasized the distinction by adding to the *mana* (efficacy) and *tabu* (sacredness) of the objects. The extent of the binding precluded this item from regular use as a weapon. It must have had a ceremonial purpose. In any event, it was distinguished from more common clubs, including *vividrasa* clubs lashed in *magimagi*, quite frequent from the 1820s onwards in museum collections. According to Clunie, such wrappings in shell were connected to festive occasions, until the shell beads were replaced in the nineteenth century by trade glass beads of various shades (2003b:99).

Interestingly, here, two glass beads have been inserted among the shell discs. One is blue and the other white, i.e. very precious according to Cook (1784, I:365) and Lockerby (1813) — see below. Both are quite large, and located on the head of the club, its efficient and most *tabu* part. They were perhaps a signature, or a distinguishing feature from other clubs, owners or makers. They are similar in size to the shell beads.

These features parallel early lashings, extensive carvings and inlays of Fijian clubs — with glass beads, human teeth, etc. Ivory inserts appear of particular significance. Clubs inlaid with ivory rarely include shell disc decoration. This pattern may suggest an evolution from one type to the other, with shell beads preceding ivory inlays, acting before them in similar ways.

One early ivory-inlaid club exists in the PEM's collection (E4796), but it may be Tongan, being entirely carved in *graffito* patterns, whereas Fijian decoration on early clubs was usually limited to sections of *relievo* designs (Mills 2007:304). Here, the number and size of the inlays also suggests a Tongan provenance. Fijian *vonotabua* clubs were not accessible to Europeans at first, and the first specimens acquired by the Whites



were not carved on their entire surface and included only small inserts (see next chapter). In Tonga on the other hand, Cook acquired massively carved and inlaid items from the 1770s (see Kaeppler 2011, 2009, 1978a). Accordingly, this club, donated to EI by B. Vanderford in 1823, tends to confirm that the importation of ivory to Fiji in the early nineteenth century modified the value and use of formerly valued materials. Finally, it substantiates the idea according to which Tongan ivory crafts influenced Fijian ones, and sheds light on the circulation of objects within Western Polynesia.



3.23— PEM, E5111 (and detail)

Two other clubs are extensively decorated with shell discs. They are *cali*, or *sali*, clubs — i.e. large beaked clubs with sharp edges. One of them (E5111) has two perforations shaped like butterflies or affronted triangles pierced through the middle of its blade. This is a design found on early *cali*, especially specimens acquired in the 1830s, and on other clubs like the *kinikini* acquired during Bellingshausen's expedition (Barratt 1990: pls.6-11). The second club (E5112) has a solid blade, chequered with the usual shallow incisions. The catalogue card for the latter suggests — probably by Clunie — an acquisition date in the 1860s. However, when compared with E4807, its style, registration number and shell beads décor, suggest it could date to the 1830s. This said, a major difference must be noticed between the two *cali*. Although both have about 30cm of their shaft wrapped in coir cord with shell beads, the way the beads have been attached varies. On E5111, the shell beads are knotted into the *magimagi*, with a different technique than on the *vunikau* (E4807). On E5112, the vegetable cord goes through the discs like in a long necklace, without effort to maintain them at equal distances. Visually speaking the effect is quite similar, but it seems that E5112 would have necessitated less time and skills, both of them significant. This technical variation

might result from an art-historical evolution, or from different places of production. The number of shell beads here, compared with that on the *vunikau* (earlier), seems to confirm the general trend suggested before — a decline in the use of shell beads. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the functionality of these clubs was intentionally preserved — or perhaps not covering their head was an aesthetic choice.



3.24— BM, Oc,LMS.191

The British Museum holds another club enveloped with shell beads, Samoan this time (Oc,LMS.191). As on previous examples, there is cord of coconut sennit coiled around it, but to this one many smaller parts were attached and at the extremity of each one there is a shell bead. This system gives it a quite loose and fluid aspect, in contrast to the tight attachments described before. The features of the club itself are consistent with a Samoan fabrication, notably its triangular lug at the bottom, and a few *graffito* carved designs. Tongan baskets, *katomosikaka*, already available in Cook's time, also incorporated shell beads in their designs (Kaeppler 2009:195). These examples suggest the extended use of shell discs on important items in Western Polynesia.



3.25— PEM, E4984

Two other Fijian weapons that include shell beads at the PEM are spears. The first one (E4975) is a *kaka*, described as a “chief's spear” by Clunie on the catalogue card. It was a given to the EI by I. Williams in 1844. The second (E4984) is a *tikau*, for which



Clunie suggested an acquisition date around 1840. Similarly, there is a barbed *gadregadre* in Paris (MQB 72.84.302), which was first registered in the Louvre's inventory in 1843 and described there as from New Zealand (Leclerc 2007:235).



3.26— MQB, 72.84.302 (and detail)

All three types were popular spears in Fiji, frequent in museum collection from the 1830s and 1840s. On these three specimens the shell beads have been threaded onto vegetable cords, carefully wrapped around several sections of their top part — i.e. their efficient and *tabu* part. Beads thus underline the barbs of the *gadregadre* spear, as *magimagi* sometimes does alone (Clunie 2003b: fig.26). Again, shell discs must have distinguished special items, leading collectors and museums to describe them as “chiefly.”

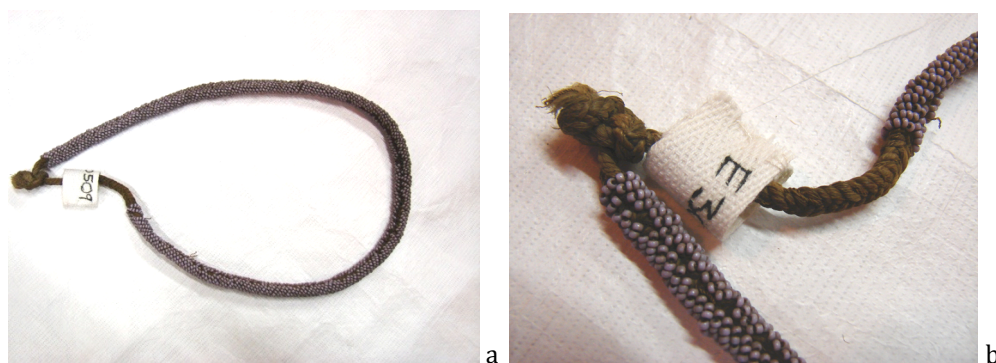


3.27— NMNH, E2852 (and detail)

Finally, shell discs were found on a restricted number of other weapons encountered during this research. These were sometimes limited to a few beads on a

single ring of *magimagi* (e.g. SI E2852). Sometimes, shell beads were also inlaid into objects, like glass beads elsewhere (e.g. BM Oc.1796). Such uses of shell beads, possibly re-uses, might indicate a certain continuity in value. Yet, most importantly they underline further equivalences between local valued materials (e.g. shell discs, pandanus strips) and imported ones (e.g. glass beads and ivory).

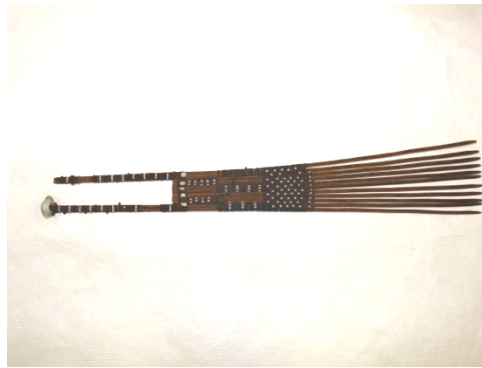
One may suggest that, when new materials replaced former ones, it was due to material and symbolic equivalences, as well as to availability. Yet, it can be pointed out that imported goods must have had additional qualities, so that Fijians benefited from the change. Whale ivory for instance was a highly durable material. It also was able to absorb oil and dyes better than most stones, bones or wood, while keeping a “shiny” surface. Glass beads were likewise more interesting than shell beads for a number of reasons. Easier to obtain, being extensively traded by Europeans and Americans, their colours were more varied than those of shell beads, and their size made them suitable for smaller items.



3.28— PEM, E30509 (and detail)

From early times, one can observe an use of glass beads on small artefacts like combs and necklaces. At the PEM there is a necklace of vegetable fibres (E30509), with tiny purple beads threaded in the periphery of the braided structure. This piece was likely acquired by Wallis between 1830 and 1852. Similarly, there is an early Fijian *iseru sasa*, a comb made of coconut palms mid-ribs (*sasa*) lashed together by the mean of extremely fine single-stranded *magimagi* fibres (E30525). Intertwined within the fibres are a few glass beads, precisely distributed onto the plaited décor. On the top of one of the longest teeth, there is a small white cowry, and another might be missing from the opposite side (see Clunie 1982a:fig.F). Unfortunately the acquisition date of this artefact

is unclear, due to disparities between the description on the catalogue card and the item examined in 2009. Yet, the combination of beads and cowry shell(s) is interesting. We have seen that beads (in shell or glass) must have distinguished special things. This was likely the case where bigger valuables (e.g. *bulivula*, pieces of ivory) were inappropriate. Here tiny cowries might echo the use of bigger ones.



3.29— PEM, E30525

With regard to this miniaturization concern, a last object should be mentioned here. This is a temple (*burekalou*) “model,”<sup>7</sup> received by the EI in 1835 from Jos. Winn Jr. (E5037). It has two striking aspects. First, it has a double roof which, as Clunie noted on the card, must be unique in Fijian collections. Second, its top beams are covered with shell beads, comparable to those on clubs and spears. Its door is also framed with a sparse row of shell discs.

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<sup>7</sup> I am not sure that such objects should actually be called models. All evidence tends to show that they were actual portable temples, i.e. receptacles for the god which allowed communication with human beings (especially priests, *bete*). Here, the word “model” is used, between quotation marks, with reference to existing literature (cf. Rochette 2003).



3.30— PEM, E5037 and details of top beams and doorframe

Small *burekalou* are known to be consistent replicas of full-size temples. They reproduced the patterns of their monumental parents, in lighter and more flexible materials — mostly *magimagi* on a reed structure.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore possible that shell beads were equivalent to white cowries (*bulivula/bulidina*), which sometimes ornamented Fijian sanctuaries, notably their top beam (e.g. Wilkes 1845, III:51).

This a rare piece of Fijian art, masterfully executed. Unfortunately, no mention of it is found in Winn’s journal, or in any related accounts. It indubitably had some religious significance, along with a high material value. In Godelier’s words it was at least “precious,” if not “sacred” (2004:19). Its alienability in the early 1830s is therefore surprising, especially knowing that it does not seem damaged or incomplete. Of course, it could have been taken by force, stolen or acquired as loot — which would have been a striking exception to the general patterns this thesis highlights. Also, one would expect that a violent event and such spectacular loot would have been recorded in Winn’s journal. One might suggest that it was commissioned, but this would have been an unusual action for American traders. And why two roofs? It is also possible that this

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<sup>8</sup> This could imply the former existence of at least one doubled-roof full-size *burekalou* in Fiji, but I am not aware of any reports of one, despite the fact that it would have most likely been noticed by foreign observers. In fact we do not know if the “models” copied specific temples, or if they only reproduced the idea of a temple, being auto-sufficient objects rather than attached to bigger *bure*.

object had been bought or “offered” as a very prestigious gift, against some highly prized thing or service. Another early miniature *burekalou*, with a single roof, exists at the PEM (E5038). This can be dated to about the same time (1830s) by comparison with the above example, and others kept in museums.

One question remains, that of the value of such objects at the moment of their exchange with Westerners, and in the eyes of all transactors involved. The issue of early religious and *tabu* artefacts and of their procurement by Westerners will be further developed in the next chapter.

### *Civa and tabua*

More material equivalences can be highlighted with reference to the PEM’s collection. Attention should now be drawn to pearl-shell (*civa*), which was highly valued in Fiji’s early times. One could underline material, symbolic and visual qualities, such as light reflection, colours and sea provenance. Yet, this section will rather refer to early uses and formal resemblances observed in museums and early descriptions. These tell us much about the initial value of *civa* shell and its relative devaluation in relation to whale ivory (*tabua*).



3.31— PEM, E5281



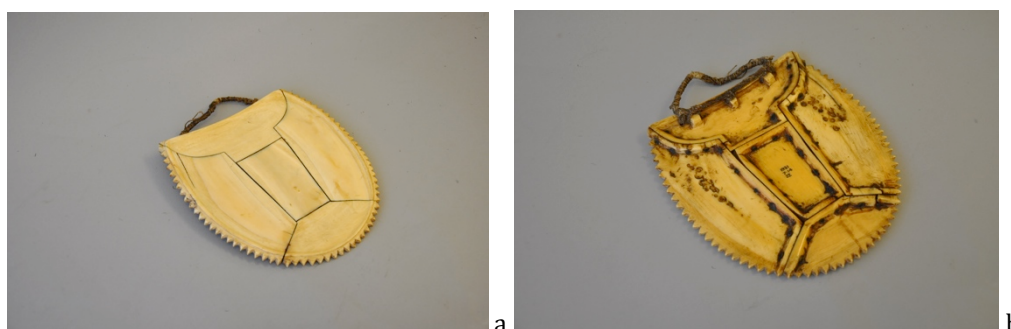
3.32— PEM, E5282

A first evidence of close equivalences between *civa* and *tabua* is the linguistic homonymy that applies to breastplates. These artefacts comprise one or the other material, or both, according to remarkable formal evolutions during the period under consideration. At first, *civa* pectorals were made of *civa* shells. *Civa* oyster were partially or entirely polished and, sometimes, their lower edges were indented. They were usually pierced with two holes, one on each side of their thickest part, and suspended around the neck on a suspension cord, and worn by individuals of high rank. The



suspension cord was usually made of vegetable fibres, although sometimes human hair was recorded (Debenham 1945:308). Most early representations and later uses of composite breastplates suggest that the concave side was worn against the body, but an illustration from Bligh's second voyage can let us think that both ways were in fashion (chapter 2).

The earliest breastplates found in museums correspond to that early type of shell pectoral. Inaccessible in Bligh's time, they entered museum collections in the late 1810s or early 1820s. At least three of them can be found at the PEM. Two have an explicit Vanderford provenance, which implies arrival at the EI by 1823 (E5281, E5284). A third example, with similar features and close catalogue number also exists (E5282), but its history is less clear. It has been flattened through its top and indented on its lower edges. E5281 seems to have been well worn. A number of traces of use are visible, including a broken suspension-hole.

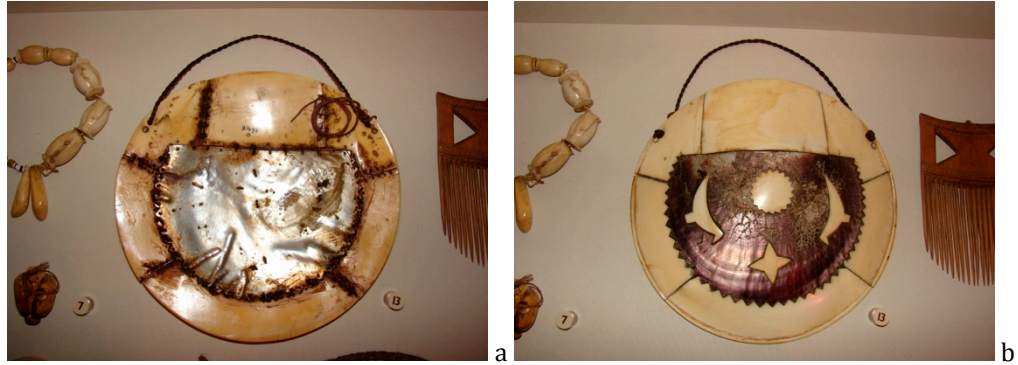


3.33— BM, Oc1931.0714.32, recto and verso

Later, following the massive importation of ivory in the area, composite breastplates appeared — in the 1820s or earlier. It seems they were co-existent with plain ivory ones. Interestingly, both were called *civa*; inlaid or overlaid *civa* in the first case (*civavonovono*), and *civa* made of *tabua* in the second (*civatabua*). Both types are shaped similarly to shell pectorals.

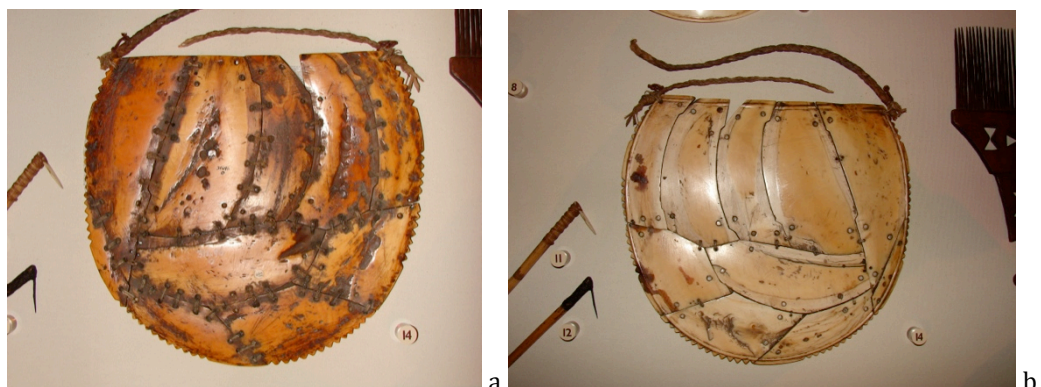
*Civatabua* might have appeared earlier than *civavonovono*, for museum specimens show technical evolutions which parallel that of other Western Polynesian crafts. Early, *civavonovono* shared features with *civatabua*, especially in the quality of their assemblage. On early specimens, all parts were fitted by means of tiny vegetable cords going through small converging holes. On these earliest specimens too, *civa* shells were usually cut to the desired shape, and expertly framed with matching pieces of

ivory. Their convex and visible side was additionally inlaid with ivory pieces of various forms (e.g. birds, stars, crescents). From the front, the assemblage technique was barely visible (e.g. AM 31498, FM 83.133WR).



3.34— AM, 31498, back and front

The technique seems to have lost precision over time, until series of roughly nailed breastplates were produced in profusion from the 1840s (Clunie 2003a:90). In any event, these precious pectorals did not arrive in museums until the colonial time (from 1874). Early technical features suggest a Samoan or Tongan fabrication, inspired from canoe planking techniques (Clunie 2003a: fig.23, 117, 118; Damm 1975). Early assemblage techniques were either invisible from the front or camouflaged with tiny ivory plugs (e.g. FM 80.73, AM 31496), and more or less discreet from the back (e.g. BM Oc1931.0714.32 & Oc1934,1205.31).

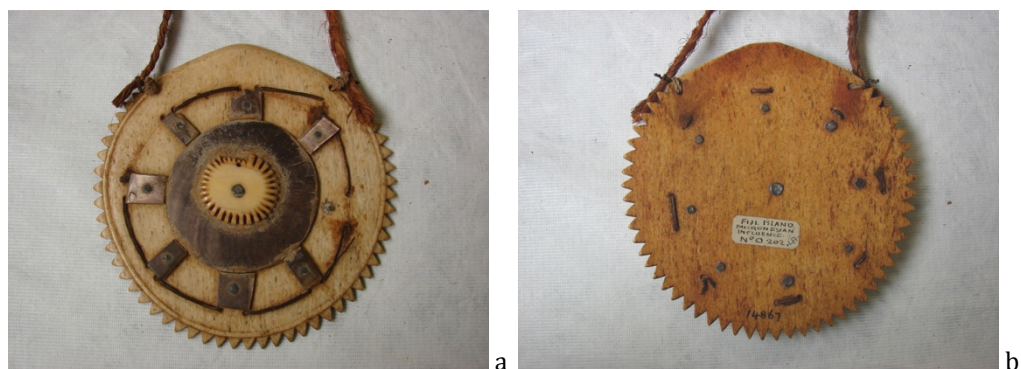


3.35— AM, 31496, back and front

A possible anteriority of *whalebone* breastplates must be noted here. Large breastplates were collected during Cook's second voyage in Tonga (Kaeppeler

1978a:211), but they did not share the physical characteristics of the above-mentioned shell, ivory and composite *civa* breastplates. *Civa*-like whalebone pectorals may therefore result from a subsequent evolution, perhaps Fijian, of eighteenth-century Tongan plates. These can be related to other *civa* pectorals because of striking visual similarities (e.g. AM 15873, FM 82.523T illustrated in Clunie, 2003a: fig.116).

In Fiji, whalebone artefacts seem to have known an earlier devaluation than their ivory counterparts. Indeed, one whalebone breastplate at least was acquired by Westerners in the 1830s (MQB 71.1954.20.178 D). This artefact is associated with Dumont d'Urville's second voyage (see next chapter). In Auckland, a later specimen has pieces of *civa* shell, whale ivory and metal wires overlaid onto the whalebone, as if the value of the bone plate itself had required the addition and accumulation of more valuable materials to form a prestigious rank marker (AM 14867).



3.36— AM, 14867, front and back

It is likely that *civavonovono* were a Fijian specificity, probably an evolution from plain *civa* pectorals. Progressively their construction became rougher, but some presumably later ones are well made, including nailed ones. It also seems that parts of early breastplates were occasionally reused or repaired with nails, which tends to confirm the habit Fijians had to conserve them over several generations (e.g. FM 81.583). It is possible that American traders observed the earliest moments of that evolution. Already quoted in chapter 1 with reference to Tanoa Visawaqa's breast ornament (CUMAA 1918.213.14), J.W. Osborn referred to *civa* breastplates as follows:

“Pearl shells with the cross taken from their back, are worn by them, some of these they consider very valuable, as they have been handed down from father to son for many generations. Old Snuff [Tanoa] has one which has been handed down in this way, it is broken and lashed together in many places, he always wears it upon his neck and takes great care of it.” (Osborn 1832-35)



Two more examples sustain the hypothesis of a strong equivalence between ivory and pearl-shell. After the wreck in 1829 of the *Minerva*, a whaler from Port Jackson, Peter Bays, the sailing-master, recorded that while on Vatoa naval instruments were stolen:

“...when we made the king sensible, by signs, that they had taken away our chronometer, sextant and compass from us, helpless as he was, he showed his supreme authority, and calling one of the natives, desired him to bring a plantain leaf, on which he laid, in order, a beautiful large pearl-shell four or five inches in diameter; the man went away with it, and in four or five minutes produced them to us.” (Bays 1831:64)

Here, the pearl-shell is used like a *tabua*. It demonstratively vehicles the chiefly request, and appears a precious compensation for the “sacrifice” to be made.



3.37— PEM, E5164

The last example is a necklace from the PEM’s early collection (E5164). It was received by the EI in 1832, from J.W. Cheever. This donor is not well-identified, but he or she was presumably related to George N. Cheever who travelled with Eagleston and Osborn on the *Emerald* (1832-35), and on other vessels from Salem (Cheever 1833, Langdon 1978). The necklace consists of over twenty pieces of mother-of-pearl, cut in the shape of turtles — some are now missing. The five remaining pendants, also in mother-of-pearl, are pointed forms which resemble the above-mentioned turtle-shell needle (CUMAA Z\_2781\_B/1923.H105). All those parts are tied together by means of vegetal fibre, coiled around a braided cord of *magimagi*. The overall shape of this artefact reminds us of later items made of whale ivory. It notably evokes *wasekaseka* or *waseisei* necklaces, abundant in colonial collections and formerly important symbols of rank, also in use in Samoa and Tonga (e.g. SI E23920, Clunie 2003a:fig.110). Regarding what has already been said about turtles, the shape of the shorter pendants is significant

and may suggest an association with *tabu* status. Later artefacts featured similar symbols, in ivory. In Cambridge for instance, there is one pendant of whale ivory shaped like a turtle (CUMAA Z\_2722\_G; Herle & Carreau 2013:15, fig.2.15) and a necklace that consists in ivory fishes dangling at the end of shell beads strings (CUMAA Z\_2770; Herle & Carreau 2013:93-94, fig.5.31). Both provide us with formal and material points for comparison. Yet, in contrast to Cambridge's ivory specimens, which were colonial acquisitions, Cheever's necklace reached America in the early 1830s.



3.38— CUMAA, Z\_2770 (Herle & Carreau 2013:94)



3.39— CUMAA, Z\_2722\_G

## Trading goods and exchange strategies

### Until the 1810s

The earliest collections of the PEM appear quite small because collecting artefacts was probably a rather marginal and sporadic activity, rather than a systematic one.

However, the trader William P. Richardson compiled a glossary of words and sentences he used on Vanualevu. This manuscript was microfilmed by the Pacific Manuscript Bureau (PMB Mf.225). It explicitly sheds light on Richardson's priority — to gather a significant cargo of sandalwood.

The first page of Richardson's "Fegee vocabulary" consist in a translation of numbers, from "one" to "one hundred," followed by an explanation of what might mean larger quantities or "thousands." The first entry of the following page is headed "sandalwood." A list of phrases follows: "who has my sandalwood [...]"; "go with me to see the sandalwood"; "what do you want for your wood"; ... "yes"; "no"; "no more"; "where is your wood"; "how many piles of wood have you got"; ... "carry the wood to the boat"; and so on (Richardson 1811-12).

After a few more words to qualify the wood quality (e.g. hollow, large) and related activities (e.g. to cut, to saw), a number of trade articles are mentioned. The English section of this list reads:

- A real whales tooth
- An artificial tooth
- A small piece of ivory
- Iron
- An axe
- An hatchet
- An adze
- A knife or saw
- [...]
- A pair of scissors
- A chisel
- A plane iron
- A gimblets [sic.]
- Beads
- Cloths
- A looking glass
- A piece of bar Iron [...] do into the shape of a chissel [sic.]
- A sea elephants tooth
- ... A razor

This provides a good idea of what was given in exchange for sandalwood and other things. Previous and following chapters show that most articles mentioned here,

notably small ironware, beads and whale's teeth, were in use in Fiji-West transactions until the mid-1850s.

Furthermore, Richardson gave the names of colours and of a few artefacts, such as fans, combs, native garments and *bilo* cups, in addition to weapons. Examples of these things might have been acquired as well as clubs, but these could have been lost, destroyed or scattered before they reached Salem, or perhaps proof of their association with Richardson disappeared. Richardson's list also includes culturally significant words related to social hierarchy, kinship, plants and even cannibalism. Finally, it provides an idea of other traders' preoccupations, naming for instance female and male genitals, sexual intercourse and words for "lie" and "oath" (Richardson 1811-12, PMB Mf.225).

A predecessor of Richardson on Vanualevu was William Lockerby, first officer on board the *Jenny* of Boston (Captain Dorr). Lockerby was marooned on the island when his ship sailed to China in July 1808, after spending approximately three months at Bua Bay gathering a large cargo of sandalwood. His journal (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925) is an invaluable source of information on early relations between inhabitants of western Vanualevu and American traders. Lockerby also compiled a glossary, along with his "Directions for Fegee or SandleWood islands" (Lockerby 1813). It is likely that Richardson had read this document before he donated it to the East India Marine Society (Dodge 1972:182).

Lockerby's glossary is also transparent about traders' concerns. He itemises various trade articles such as metal tools, beads, and looking glasses, the first of them being the word for "ivory" translated as "Tamboo" (i.e. *tabua*), and the second "Iron" said to be pronounced "Matow" (i.e. *matau*). In contrast to Richardson, Lockerby mentioned muskets, ammunition and (Western) clothes. Several kinds of food are also listed (e.g. pork, fish, breadfruits, plantains, yam, taro). Those could certainly be obtained via exchanges. Lockerby also provided his counterparts with ready-made sentences: "Who has got any wood to sell today?"; "Where is the sandalwood?"; "Go with me and show me it?"; etc. (Lockerby 1813; Dodge 1972:183). Most interestingly, Lockerby gives a list of "Trade for Fegee" too. This lists a number of trade articles, along with what appears to be recommended quantities to bring to Fiji. That list has been reproduced by Dodge (1972:187).

“Ivory made in the form of whale tooth” is the first entry of the list, and Lockerby added that “400 lb. will make 2000 Teeth of 1<sup>lb</sup> to 1<sup>os</sup> each.” This gives a good idea of the quantity of ivory in circulation in Fiji during the sandalwood period.

In fact, “ivory of any description” is the second entry, soon followed by “knives with ivory handle.” In between, Lockerby recommended the use of white shells, which he said are “very valuable” and traders should bring “as many as you can get.” Like whale’s teeth and substitutes, this shows an understanding of Fijian categories and the value of white shells, especially white cowries.

The usual list of iron tools follows (e.g. razors, axes, nails), with the addition of “thin cloth of any colour made into screens of 6 fathoms long & 5 inches broad.” The latter category suggests an early attraction for Western fabrics, observable throughout the period under consideration. Next on Lockerby’s list are “beads of all sorts,” but the supercargo underlined that green and blue were preferred — a little contrast with Cook’s remarks who also mentioned red and white ones (chapter 2). Below, one finds looking glasses and “red cloth for slinging teeth,” mentioned here for the first time. Both types were extensively traded until the mid-1850s, with high exchange rates as one can judge from early accounts and from their late appearance in museum collections. Strip of red — and blue — cloth were notably combined with ivory on large necklaces made of whale’s teeth strung on vegetable cords. Sometimes these appear to have been reused from cachalot’s teeth for ceremonial presentation, *tabua*. Such necklaces are quite frequent in early colonial collections (e.g. SI E23918; AM 14147 & 14816).



3.40— NMNH, E23918

Finally, at the bottom of the list, Lockerby suggested “if you could procure some of the New Zealand images they would answer.” This echoes continuously extended networks, already evoked in chapter 2.

Following that list Lockerby specified that “a piece of ivory, weight about one lb, is worth two tons of wood,” thus confirming the extremely high exchange value of ivory.

From early times, desire could modify exchange rates. The sacrifices that traders, and Fijians, were ready to make varied according to their motivation. For example, Lockerby related how a friend of his ended up buying a small amount of sandalwood, over ten times its price in whale’s teeth, from the family of the woman he tried to seduce — in vain (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:72–73).

In several instances, items that Euro-Americans considered valuable, and which they therefore expected Fijians to welcome cheerfully, were in fact neglected in comparison with whale’s teeth and other goods (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:63-64). Lockerby illustrated this incomprehension in 1808:

“The King [of Bua] had a present made him of a wooden house, by some gentlemen of Botany Bay, Lord, Cable & Co., which he did not like. ...The King said it would neither keep out the sun, nor the rain. The house was divided into two apartments; one containing the different articles the King had obtain from Europeans, and in the other was deposited the fire-arms that I had with me in the boat, consisting in four muskets, two pairs of pistols, six cutlasses, six boarding pikes, a compass, quadrant, spy-glass, &c. ...

“The King has likewise been presented with a brass laced hat, with a brass crown, but he would much rather have had a whale’s tooth, that being the most valuable article among them. They hang them about their necks on great festivals, and give them with their daughters in marriage—as their marriage portion—in short, he who is possessed of a quantity of them, thinks himself extremely rich.” (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:25)

## The 1820s

After the first experiments of sandalwood merchants, *bêche-de-mer* traders, it seems, planned their transactions more strategically. In the 1820s, they obviously differentiated “trifles” (e.g. beads and iron tools), with which they bought food, subsidiary services and made small presents, from valuables (e.g. ivory and firearms). These were used in payment for trading wealth, related services (e.g. wood cutting, fishing and curing *bêche-de-mer*) and as significant diplomatic gifts. Progressively, Western manufactured goods took a larger place in both categories.

During the 1820s, many exchange patterns observable until the 1850s were recorded. Most of the time, provisions were easy to obtain. Often islanders brought them

to the ships without even being asked, along with other goods that may be considered less valued than things with more restricted circulation. From all evidence, Fijians tried to get all the Western goods they could, in return for food stuffs and lower-valued manufactured items. Thus, in late 1827 at Naviti, William Cary, a sailor from the whaler *Oeno* wrecked at Vatoa in 1824, loaded his boat with “coconuts, bananas, and sugar cane for... a few beads and trinkets” (1998:61). At about the same time, at Bau, Captain Driver “was crowded from morning till night with women and children bringing beche de mer,<sup>9</sup> mats for bags,<sup>10</sup> fruits, vegetables and everything which they thought he would buy” (Cary 1998[1887]:64). For proper cargo the negotiation appears to have been tougher. This mostly concerned chiefs. According to Cary, Fijians regarded Driver as a generous man, good to trade with. “[His] price for one musket was sixteen hogsheads full of beche de mer which it took them five or six days to get from the reefs” (*Ibid.*:64). In July 1828, Cary himself obtained three large turtle-shells for a “fowling piece” with four barrels, superior to common muskets (*Ibid.*:79). Both examples confirm a growing demand for firearms in the 1820s. Cary also reported an early attraction for paint (*Ibid.*:78), mostly red paint. Rum was used too, as a “treat” (*Ibid.*:76). In 1829, Bays confirmed the Fijian attraction for European cloth and metal tools, including metal parts of naval instruments in peripheral zones like Vatoa (1831:48-51).

## From the 1830s

The *Glide* was a trading ship from Salem. She travelled between New England and Manila via Fiji between 1829 and 1831. In March 1831 she was wrecked on the north coast of Vanualevu (Macuata) (see PMB Mf.218; Oliver & Dix 1846). Paine gives us a good idea of the trade her crew conducted ashore, and of the organisation of the settlement dedicated to the exploitation of bêche-de-mer:

“The ship, having been hove down without mishap, was made ready for opening a trade in beche-de-mer, a species of sea slug, which was dried and carried to China as a delicacy in high repute among the people of that country. A safe anchorage was found, and the king of the nearest tribe ‘made pliable’ by numerous gifts after which a contract was made with him for gathering the cargo. He assembled his people and set them at work erecting on the beach the row of buildings needed for storing and curing the sea slugs.

“When this was done the warriors of nearby friendly tribes began to appear in canoes, bringing their wives and children. They built huts along the beach until an

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<sup>9</sup> Probably in very small quantities in comparison with the actual fishing of bêche-de-mer conducted by Fijian men, under chiefly supervision.

<sup>10</sup> Does this suggest unfinished artefacts or rudimentary specimens? Such “mats for bags” may also have designated plaited coconut palms that Fijians still use to transport food.



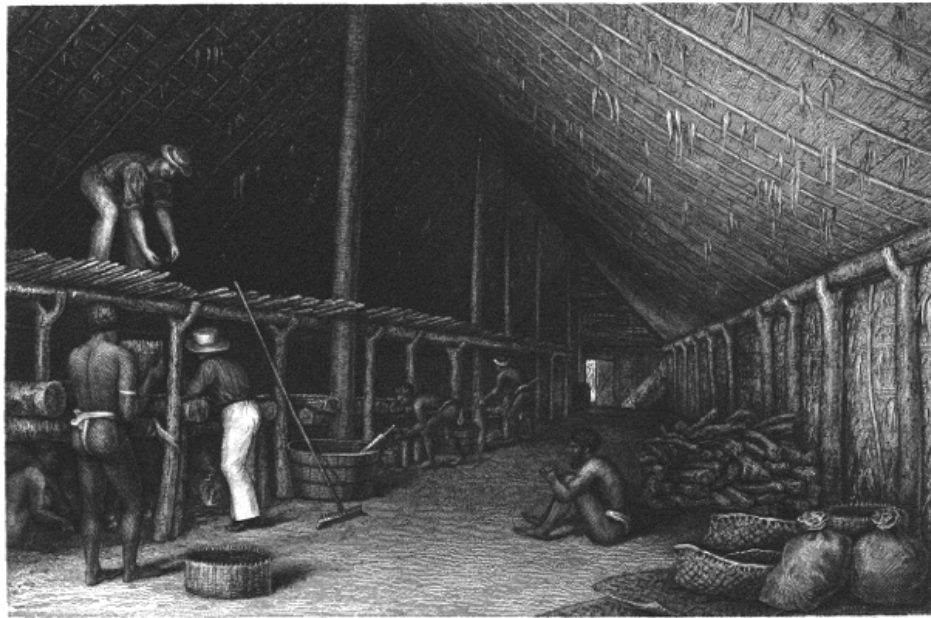
uproarious village had sprung up. Its people bartered tortoise shell, hogs and vegetables for iron tools, and whales' teeth, and helped gather beche-de-mer in the shallow water along the reefs. Two of the ship's officers and perhaps a dozen of the crew lived ashore for the purpose of curing the cargo. Their plant was rather imposing, consisting of a 'Batter House,' a hundred feet long by thirty wide in which the fish was spread and smoked; the 'Trade House' in which were stored muskets, pistols, cutlasses, cloth, iron-ware, beads, etc., and the 'Pot House' which contained the great kettles used for boiling the unsavory mess. In putting up these buildings the king would make a hundred of his islanders toil a week on end for a musket—and he kept the musket.

"The business aboard, the din of industry ashore, the coming and going of boats and the plying of hundreds of canoes to and from the sea reef, gave much animation to things." (Paine 2007:378)

Paine does not give the place or the date of the above-described settlement, but in 1830 Cary reported:

"We lay here for a long time, but getting ahead very slowly with our cargo, the Captain [J. Kinsman of the brig *Quill* from Salem] concluded to get to Myambooa [Bua, western Vanualevu], as the beche de mer had become very scarce at Ambow [Bau]. About the middle of October we got under way for Myambooa bay, where we found the ship *Glide*, of Salem, Capt. Henry Archer." (Cary 1998[1887]:79)

The above scene is therefore likely to have taken place on Vanualevu, at Bua in late 1830 or shortly after the wreck of the *Glide* at Macuata, in March 1831 (see PMB Mf.218).



BICH DE MAR HOUSE.

3.41— "Bich de Mar House," by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III: 232)



During the 1830s, exchanges were probably the most intense. In September 1833, for example, the content of two chests onboard the bark *Pallas*, filled up with trade items, was described in the ship's accounts (Archer 1832-34):

"Trade in a Chest to be kept on board.

2 doz Razors  
 1 " Plane Irons  
 2 " Bread Knives  
 2 " Carving Knives  
 2 " Gross Jew Harps  
 1 doz Plane Irons  
 ¼ doz 2 inch Chisels  
 ½ " 1½ inch Chisels  
 10 Inch Chisels  
 ½ doz 1½ inch Chisels  
 ½ " 1¾ " Chisels  
 4 " sheath Knives  
 ½ " Pattern Hatchets  
 4 doz Bread Knives  
 2 doz 5½ inch Sheath Knives  
 ½ doz Broad Hatchets  
 ½ doz Shingling "  
 3 doz Malay Knives  
 1 bag Flints  
 1 " Balls  
 1 " Bugles  
 9 Looking Glasses  
 6 Trumpets  
 2 doz Whistles  
 6 doz Scissors  
 35 small Hooks  
 8 doz large "  
 5 flasks  
 4 doz Butcher Knives  
 6 " small "  
 8 " Bread "

Chest for Nundura

1 Doz Plane Irons  
 6 sheets Paper  
 2 Papers Beads  
 200 fish hooks  
 3 Axes  
 1 Package tobacco  
 4 doz Knives  
 1 Paper Jew Haprs  
 1 Dozen Chisels  
 1 " Small Knives  
 4 doz glasses  
 6 " scissors  
 10 Hatchets 8 Hatchets  
 5 powder flasks  
 1 doz Malay Knives  
 1 " Whistles  
 8 Bayonets  
 100 flints  
 200 Bales  
 10 Barrel teeth  
 12 Tub "  
 20 Small Basket "  
 1 doz Razors  
 4 Gouges  
 1 keg Powder  
 2 Hinghan boxes  
 10 Tapas  
 1 dozen bottles

(Archer 1832-34)

Although the *Pallas* was not stationed in Fiji when these inventories were made, most items mentioned here can be found in voyagers' narratives from Fiji. In any event, this gives us a good idea of what trade stock could be found on board trading ships.

The increase of sound-making instruments and glass materials is interesting. Both must have had significant qualities to seduce Fijian partners, stimulating their curiosity and desire. Bottles for example, in addition to being unusual by their

transparency and glassy aspect, were useful exotic waterproof containers. Similarly, the range of metal tools described here shows a broader variety, including bayonets, all kind of knives, among which Malay knives and knives with sheaths. In short, it seems that, progressively, anything that could serve a trade purpose would do, traded items being continuously adapted to islanders' demands and trading goals.

### Transversal patterns

From reading travellers' accounts (see references at the end of this volume), one could conclude that, most of the time, Western sailors were opportunist. They seized the occasions they had to conduct business, frequently updating their trade stock in consequence. They without doubt preferred cheap deals, but they adapted to circumstances and, eventually, rarely refused a business opportunity. So far, the transactions can mostly be described as acts of "balanced reciprocity" (Sahlins 1972:194-195), i.e. directs exchanges implying a circumstantial balance between what was received and what was given in exchange, so that both parties were satisfied at least temporarily.

Like Cary, Osborn, who kept a log aboard the *Emerald*, suggested that Fijians were very demanding. In particular, he noticed their habit of asking for "gifts." At Bau, 12th June 1834, he wrote:

"I went to see the Old King, he and all his troop commenced begging directly. He should be called a King of beggars for about here all hands practice it, principally for red paint & Tobacco of which all hands are immoderately fond." (Osborn 1833-35)

Besides highlighting the importance of material transactions and newly imported valuables within Fiji-West trade relations, this statement suggests that Americans may have been considered indebted to their hosts. One must not forget that Euro-American traders were the ones initially demanding things from Fijians (sandalwood, bêche-de-mer, workmanship). Moreover, Fijian islanders were usually described as generous, trying to anticipate and outdo their partner's desires, which of course can be seen as a strategy to contract powerful alliances and get benefit in return. Their "begging" can therefore be interpreted as *kerekere*, i.e. legitimate requests within a context of "generalized reciprocity" (see Sahlins 1993, 1972, 1962 and chapter 1).

In any event, White men frequently received food gifts. For example in 1808 on Koro island, Captain Dorr of the *Jenny* was offered “a large baked shark as a present,” by the chief of the island and his wife:<sup>11</sup>

“It was delivered with ceremony into the arms of the Captn., by one of the chief principal’s men [probably his *matanivanua*], as he was standing upon the quarter-deck. In spite of his inclination to please his visitors, he was obliged to let go his hold, and stop his nostrils, for the unsavoury steam which arose from this delicate present was too strong for him not to be affected by it; but when the shark (which was folded up in green leaves at the time it was given to him and smoking hot) fell upon the deck and broke to pieces, the stench it spread was so great that the Captn. was compelled to betake himself into the cabin for shelter; while her ladyship was picking up the precious morsels...To make his peace with her, Captn. Dorr presented her with a looking-glass, some beads, &c.” (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:11).

Later, at Koro Island:

“We dined with this good old king and some of his principal men upon breadfruit and plantains; for drink we had the milk of the cocoa-nut. We bought from the king sixteen fine large hogs. Afterwards he made us a present of a fine large hog and a quantity of breadfruit, &c.; in return we gave him a whale’s tooth, several pieces of iron, and some glass beads for his wife... The old queen made us another present of cloth of her own making from the bark of a tree, and some cocoa-nut oil. The king made us each a present of a carved spear, a club bow and a bundle of arrows.” (In Thurn & Wharton 1925:12)

At Vatoa, in 1829, Bays and his men received a pig as they departed for Tonga (Bays 1831:71). Like after the wreck of the *Oeno*, Vatoa’s inhabitants, although under the authority of Ono and Lakeba chiefs, seemed willing to set up alternative partnerships with Europeans. Young, who discussed the political implications of the Lauan attitudes towards Euro-American visitors with reference to local power struggles, highlighted strategic attempts to act in accordance or discordance with the sovereign power of Lakeba in the Lauan southern fringes, notably in the context of the early Christianisation of the group (see chapter 5 and Young 1982). However, he also suggested that:

“The overall experience of castaways in Lau indicates that they were regarded as being of very little importance either as warriors or as the means of facilitating trade with foreign vessels. The evident familiarity with such things as muskets, knives and axes which Holmes found on Vulaga in 1840 is thus evidence of the incorporation of European goods into the existing economic system rather than direct trade with American shipping.” (Young 1982: 38)

Violent interactions and acts of “negative reciprocity” (Sahlins 1972:195) occurred occasionally. It seems that these were mostly concerned with the main trading activities (i.e. sandalwood, *bêche-de-mer*), rather than object collecting, for this was not

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<sup>11</sup> Like pigs and turtles, shark had a special *tabu* status in many parts of Fiji. This must have been a valuable and highly symbolic gesture from the chief of Koro.

a major occupation or a source of income. Among tactics to overcome and anticipate possible deceit, it became common for Fijians as well as for traders to hold some hostages while transactions were going on. Retained individuals were preferably chosen among chiefly families or influential sailors. This tactic was problematic, increasing tensions and sometimes triggering violence. Peter Dillon related the conflict he and the rest of the *Hunter's* crew faced in western Vanualevu in 1813:

“Chiefs and other individuals of importance did not come on board anymore, afraid that they would be kept hostage until they had fulfilled their commitments to us and completed our cargo. Captain Robson, offended as he was to have been fooled by such barbaric and cunning people, promised that he would take his revenge against his formerly faithful allies, whom he had helped so often to feast upon the flesh of their enemies.” (Dillon 2005:23)<sup>12</sup>

In this instance, a fight followed, to the disadvantage of the foreign traders. Dillon extensively and theatrically depicted it, apparently eager to show the extent of Fijian cruelty (2005:25-31). He described scenes of cannibalism, more or less plausible, along with Fijian tortures, which by his own admission were rare and mostly rumours. A few brutal interactions were thus recorded by traders and beachcombers from the early 1800s to the 1850s. Along with the narrative of local warfare, they contributed to the ferocious reputation of the archipelago.

Apart from their impact on Western imaginaries, such fights increased the impression that Fijians, at the beginning at least, had an advantage in their transactions with Western traders. The knowledge they had of their territory was a considerable asset against foreign adversaries. This given, violent interactions jeopardized the possibility of future transactions.

## *Guns*

Firearms, powder and other ammunition appear to have been among the most important trade items of the *bêche-de-mer* period. Traders' accounts show that they were extensively given away, against huge quantities of sea slugs, turtle-shells and related services from the 1820s. All kinds of firearms were exchanged with Fijians, from muskets to small cannon (Clunie 2003b:184ff.; 1983a). Cheap flintlocks were bartered above all (Clunie 1983a:103). Trading captains brought many to Fiji for the sole purpose

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<sup>12</sup> « Les chefs et autres individus de quelque importance ne venaient plus à bord du navire, de peur qu'on ne les retint comme otages, jusqu'à ce qu'ils n'eussent rempli leurs engagements de compléter notre cargaison. Le capitaine Robson était vexé de se voir joué de la sorte par un peuple barbare et rusé, et se promettait de tirer vengeance de ses anciens et fidèles alliés qu'il avait si souvent aidés à se régaler de la chair de leurs ennemis. »

of trade. More valued rifles circulated as diplomatic gifts to influential chiefs and as payment to White residents who proved helpful – and knew more about guns than Fijians. Firearms may help us to understand American trading strategies, along with Fijian mechanisms of incorporation of Western goods. Let us investigate the patterns of a transformation, that of American muskets into Fijian valuables (*iyau*).

Clunie has highlighted many patterns of this absorption (1983a). With the help of linguistics, he explained that Fijians did not just add firearms to their repertoire; they incorporated them into pre-existing weaponry with which they shared resemblances (i.e. bows and clubs). If they had simply borrowed guns from the Whites they could have used English names for them. Yet, in Fijian significant words designated the musket, its parts and related implements (Clunie 1983a:106). Thus, the powder was called *nuku* (i.e. sand) and the powder horn *saqaninuku* (i.e. container for the sand).

More interestingly perhaps, the rifle was given the name of an existing Fijian weapon, *dakai* (bow). The bullet was consistently called “arrow,” *gasau* (literally reed), showing a clear understanding of guns’ shooting properties. Yet, as Clunie noticed, muskets also resembled Fijian clubs, especially *cali* and *gata* which have blunt edges (*Ibid.*:107). It therefore seems that firearms were not substitutes for bows or clubs, rather a powerful combination of the two.

Among the reasons for this integration, the efficiency of guns as weapons probably came first. Yet, it is possible that the material features of firearms had mattered as well. Ritual and military uses of Fijian muskets have been referenced by Clunie. Among several examples of transferred practices, he mentioned ivory and bead inlays on muskets (*Ibid.*:114-119). It seems that, like clubs, Fijian rifles could earn a special status on the battlefield, and/or through their owner’s prestige and efficacy (*mana*). By having them inlaid, Fijians made such status visible, like they did with chiefly artefacts such as clubs and headrests. With reference to Forge (1973), one may perceive such decorated items as non-verbal ways of signifying high status and correlated *mana*.

Clunie discussed three inlaid muskets. Two of them are now in Aberdeen; the third is in Salem. Sir Arthur Gordon acquired all three in 1876 in Nadroga (south-western Vitilevu), where he undertook military action against interior peoples. This might indicate a change in the alienability of such artefacts in early colonial times, unless Gordon’s military spoils would be regarded as the result of “negative reciprocity”

(Sahlins 1972:195), or a solemn act of submission involving precious inalienable items (Godelier 1996:101).

### *References to God(s)*

The early acquisition of religious artefacts might appear surprising. Yet, *tabu* elements, after they had been used, could be regarded as “empty” and no longer valued. In other words, they might have become alienable. This nevertheless suggests a quasi-ethnographical collecting enterprise by some traders. Similar exchange patterns will be further discussed in chapter 4.

For now, the presence of such artefacts in the PEM’s collection might also imply a “change of heart” from Fijians. Initially faithful to — and afraid of — their gods, it seems that sometimes they began to question their strength in comparison with the White men’s *kalou* (god). For instance, Lockerby reported that Fijians were introduced to Western beliefs and propaganda. Well before the official arrival of Christian missionaries (mid-1830s, chapter 5), they were given proofs that powerful forces, perhaps supernatural ones, accompanied Westerners. Among possible expressions of such forces were huge vessels, firearms and diseases. Some illnesses appeared with the Whites, who seemed immunized against them — as well as against the effects of alcohol (Derrick 1957:38-39; Routledge 1985:42). Thus, Lockerby related how a chief, to whom one of his companions had given chewing tobacco, died from the sickness the substance caused. Lockerby described in details the fear that tobacco poisoning provoked (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:68-69).

Euro-American traders tried to use such fears to their advantage (see Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:64-66), while they were also concerned about their own beliefs in the face of some Fijian customs. Several beachcombers described themselves fighting cannibalism or the strangulation of chiefly wives in God’s name. Lockerby encouraged Fijians to throw bodies overboard their canoes to prevent their cannibal consumption (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:67). In Naduri Bay (1809), he likewise tried to save a widow from being put to death, consecutively attempting to buy the woman’s life with valuables and to threaten the chief in charge in the name of the “White man’s Callow” (*Ibid.*:63-64). Milcairns provided further examples, underlining the traumatic aspects of Fiji-West encounters (2006:201).

In the above examples, the attempts proved fruitless. In both instances, Lockerby failed to change the course of events. In the strangulation case, however, the chief who had first feared his own *kalou* and people, showed remorse afterwards. In fear of the White man's *kalou*, he offered compensation in coconuts to Lockerby, for him to accept on behalf of his God. The supercargo refused, but probably learnt from the experience. The following example of interaction he gave in his journal shows a change in strategy. From the passive posture of someone who bears higher moral qualities, he started acting like somebody who held supernatural powers. Thus, in 1809, on the "Embagaba" river, lacking a large whale's tooth to obtain the sandalwood he wanted, he imagined a "stratagem." In the name of the "ship's god" he manipulated stones and coconuts around some pound to render it *tabu* until he had obtained satisfaction. According to his journal, the strategy worked well, showing a certain understanding of Fijian belief systems (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:64-66).

### *Language*

With regard to the translation issues mentioned in chapter 1, the question of language is of particular interest here, having been a major issue of traders and beachcombers in their transactions with Fijians. Fiji never developed any pidgin *per se*. Moag explained that a "Pidgin Fijian" stemmed from pluri-cultural exchanges in modern Fiji (1978). Some features he described probably applied to early linguistic exchanges as well (e.g. standardization, simplification). Yet, in contrast to Vanuatu, for example, where a "bêche-de-mer language" (*bislama*) emerged from early contacts, it seems that the communication between Fijians and *kai valagi* (Europeans) mainly happened in English or in local dialects; not in a standardized hybrid of the two. Of course, Fijians borrowed words like they borrowed things from foreigners. Yet, as for firearms, they also gave imported goods existing Fijian terms. Thus, in 1810 already, the stone adze (*matau*) shared its name with newly introduced metal hatchets (Richardson 1811-12). Fijian vocabularies integrated English elements, more or less Fijianized. *Tavako* (tobacco) is an early example; *bulumakau* (cow) is another famous one (Schütz 1978:3-4).

Locally, Tongan and other Polynesian languages could be used too, but this was a limited option for traders and explorers. Geraghty has demonstrated that Fijian and Polynesian languages developed as rather independent dialect chains, although they had common ancestors — especially eastern branches of Fijian and Tongan dialects (1983).

In Fiji, one dialect chain developed on western Vitilevu and another spread over eastern Vitilevu and Lau. Some zones, initially related to western Vitilevu came under eastern influence. For instance, the languages of Kadavu, Vanualevu or Ra began to sound more like eastern Vitilevu and Lauan dialects (Geraghty 1983:349). Such transfers impacted on local “communalects” (*Ibid.*:18). Yet, the east-west disparity remained (Waterhouse 1997[1866]:348-50).

Traders and beachcombers first entered in contact with a limited number of partners and places, most of them speaking a version of “eastern Fijian.” They could thus focus on a few dialects, quite close to each other. In complement, they relied on indigenous paths of communication. Mainly in touch with coastal groups, they could nevertheless obtain wood and food from inland. It has been a common idea in Pacific studies that colonial powers developed trans-archipelago communication, usually via the introduction of a foreign language (e.g. French or English). However, “dialect chains” also described in New Caledonia and Vanuatu, permitted an efficient step-by-step communication between neighbouring groups, all along the chain. Furthermore, matrimonial exchange of spouses and *vasu* (uterine nephew) relationships, along with trading and mythical connections, favoured contact between “communalects.” According to John Hunt (1843), quoted in Schütz’s introduction (1978:2), chiefs were often “linguists” who spoke at least two or three dialects; and it is probable that heralds (*matanivanua*) and envoys (*mataki*) did too. Related areas also shared terms, even when they were quite distant from each other, like Lau and western Vanualevu (Geraghty 1983, chapter 6:277-347).

Early, traders and explorers also resorted to interpreters. Some of them were beachcombers such as Cary (Paine 2007:386-388). Others were islanders who had learned foreign languages, such as Cokanauto of Rewa. In 1840, Belcher referred to him as an intelligent man who spoke English, French and Spanish and usually wore European clothes (Belcher 1843, II:50).<sup>13</sup> At the beginning of the sandalwood trade, however, communication with trading partners (coastal people of western Vanualevu) required learning their language, enough at least to buy wood and food (see Richardson 1811-12; Lockerby 1813).

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<sup>13</sup> This individual is also known as “Phillips” from the name given to him by J.H. Eagleston, in homage to his employer S.C. Phillips (Eagleston 1834).



Although their spelling diverged a lot from modern written Fijian, and despite some confusions between titles and names, places and directions (e.g. “Myemboo” (*Mai Bua*) instead of Bua), Lockerby and Richardson seem quite accurate phonetically speaking. In any event, their testimonies show real effort to communicate with islanders. To conclude, linguistic differences never seemed to have been much of a hindrance in Fiji-West early commerce, soon overcome by the employment of cross-cultural interpreters and by mutual acquaintance. In peaceful times, visitors and natives quickly learned from each other. They started with “sign” language and a few words (Bays 1831, Cary 1998[1887]) and soon reached a quite deep level of understanding, to the point that sailors were sometimes obliged to use other languages to prevent islanders from understanding them (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:49). Each trader increased the word stock by making similar lists (e.g. Osborn 1833-35).

## A new Fijian era

Historians have emphasized the role of the first half of the nineteenth century in the making of modern Fiji (Derrick 1957; Routledge 1985). Centred on the very dynamic 1830s, the period under discussion saw the emergence of what could be called “a new Fijian era.” Routledge underlined that the role of Westerners in Fiji’s inner dynamics must not be overstated: “Europeans did not begin to act as independent agents in Fijian policy until after 1850” (Routledge 1985:37-38). Yet, he also stated that the role of foreign goods such as firearms, and those who knew how to use them, influenced the rise of a number of political units such as Bau in the first half of the nineteenth century (*Ibid.*:43-48).

## Diplomacy versus pillage

Beside alliances and trade with Westerners, plunder and indirect exchanges also provided access to Western goods. Trader and beachcomber accounts relate that many ships ended up plundered before 1850, after they had wrecked or when they were at anchor. In most cases, Fijians took as much as they could, including the boat herself and the personal belongings of the crew (clothes, naval instruments) (Bays 1831, Cary 1998[1887]). Such robberies sometimes accompanied the massacre of the crew. Yet, what some would regard as looting may have been considered as a form of *kerekere* by Fijians (see chapter 1), and it probably did not reach the same level of drama from a

native point of view as from a Western one. To some extent, islanders may have felt entitled to act as they did. From a Fijian cultural perspective, it seems that vessels lost at sea or taken in military action belonged to those who had proved superior in the circumstance. Similar prerogatives were acknowledged within traditional “dyads” of exchange partners, between the owners of the land (*itaukei*) and foreign powerful entities (*turaga*) for instance (Hocart 1914; Hocart 1915; Sahlins 1976; Rochette 2010).

How foreigners were welcomed falls in the scope of local political strategies (Sahlins 1985, 73-103). Likewise, some Fijian chiefs regarded transactions with the Whites as political opportunities. Others opted for a rather defensive method, which involved violent interactions. Of course, some partnerships also failed in the course of their development. Such attitudes, even though they aimed to manage the foreign intrusion, also targeted local opponents and partners. Those who are remembered as *rebels* often adopted a counter-position to that of the official power.

The case of Bau offers a range of examples. Until 1829, Naulivou, the Vunivalu, incorporated Western partners, including Charlie Savage, and things, including firearms, into his policies. These strategies aimed to enhance the greatness of Bau, and of the Vunivalu’s lineage. Naulivou’s brother, Tanoa Visawaqa, prolonged this policy, aiming to establish a quasi-monopoly in Western partnerships for Bau. The latter became well-known among traders and beachcombers as an ally of the Whites and a worthwhile exchange partner. Yet, rebels chiefs, among whom were Seru Tanoa, Mara Kapaiwai and more ambiguously Namosimalua of Viwa, worked on alternative partnerships and sometimes acted against the Whites in opposition to the Vunivalu’s policy. The rebellion on the *Laurice* (or “Manila brig”), led by her Filipino crew with the support of the above chiefs, is one example of their dissident actions. A few years later, they organised a coup against the Vunivalu, who had prevented their violent actions against Western interests (Clunie 1984; Routledge 1985:50).

Plunder was also a way to procure Western goods for those who had limited access to them via diplomatic negotiations. In the case of the “Manila brig” the distribution of the loot is interesting. The brig herself went to Naulivou, most likely as a diplomatic gesture from the rebels, although a quite embarrassing one. He eventually destroyed her, with the exception of the masts, integrated in the new *burekalou* of Bau, Vatanitawake (fig. 5.6). Such foreign elements were obviously prestigious, associated with the ideas of novelty and exoticism, and vectors of fear and respect in both Western

and Fijian camps. Among other powerful symbols, Seru Tanoa got the firearms of the *Laurice* (Levesque 2002:35).

### The centres of power in the 1800s

The distribution of power in Fiji in the early nineteenth century reflected the access each chiefdom had to Western goods, whether as a cause or as a consequence of their influence. Major political units emerged in the period of study. As their power strengthened, they increased involvement in Western trade (e.g. Bau and neighbouring chiefdoms, Cakaudrove) or worked on partnerships with “friends” of the Whites (e.g. Lau). In contrast, peripheral zones, such as Ono-i-Lau, arose too, their relations to traders being conditioned by their outsider position.

During the sandalwood period, the western part of Vanualevu benefited — and suffered — almost alone from the Western trade. However, the authority that Bua and Macuata acquired did not allow them to compete with southern and eastern kingdoms in *bêche-de-mer* times. Sea slugs and turtles were not found everywhere in equal quality and quantity. Bua’s trepang for instance was less valuable than species found within windward reefs, in eastern Vitilevu and at Cakaudrove (Cary 1998[1887]:65). The chiefs of such places used their ruling position to lead the commerce. They thus benefited from the pyramidal and specialized Fijian systems, as well as from the trade itself. For example, one could have expected fishermen’s (*gonedau*) clans to take most advantage from the commerce of holothurians and turtle-shells (Clunie 1983:107), but *kai wai* (people of the sea) served their own chiefs (Sahlins 1985:99-102). Again, the Vunivalu of Bau, and his complex relations with local and foreign groups, is a case to point (Routledge 1985:29-42, 50-51, 53-62, 80-88; Toganivalu s. d.).

The central power at Lakeba is another example. Without good quality trepang and little interested in direct transactions with the Whites, Tui Nayau (ruling chief of Lau) could, however, obtain almost everything he wanted via his allies at Bau, Tonga and Cakaudrove (Young 1982:38). He provided them with canoes, valuables from Lau and beyond (e.g. wooden artefacts, including canoes), wives and tribute.<sup>14</sup> In exchange, he was treated with respect and supplied with riches, including *kula* feathers — for the trade with Tongans — and Western goods. Tui Nayau then redistributed *iyau* to his local

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<sup>14</sup> Lakeba at certain times was tributary to Bau. Yet, as Young (1982; 1993) and Kaeppler (1978b) have demonstrated, along with various historical accounts (Henderson 1931a), the relations between Lau and its allies were far more complex than merely tributary.

partners. Lau and Bau thus exemplify Fijian cooperative systems, running through several ecosystems and parts of the Fijian islands. Yet, such positions required a great deal of diplomatic skill, especially when one's allies were in conflict,<sup>15</sup> and close control of tributary groups (see Young 1982).

## Conclusion

The preceding has aimed to exemplify the entanglement of Fiji-West transactions in Western and Fijian political strategies, as well as into both sides' symbolic and value systems. Put another way, this chapter sketched complex Fiji-West exchange relations, as well as the extent of foreign impact on both sides. The degree of intimacy that traders and beachcombers reached with their Fijian partners was unrivalled in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was not the case with missionaries, as their aims and methods did not give them the same flexibility as the traders who preceded them. The ethnography, linguistics, history and art history of Fiji are much indebted to these early experiences of traders in Fiji, and so is the Western perception of Fiji and Fijians. We have also seen that, notwithstanding S.C. Phillips' instructions, artefact collecting remained a subsidiary concern for traders. Nonetheless, the PEM's collection proves that traders and beachcombers accessed a broad range of Fijian things, most of which must have been received as gifts or bought as souvenirs. Like in other ethnographic collecting enterprises, the quality of exchanged items varied with circumstances, social hierarchy and individual motivations.

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<sup>15</sup> For example Lakeba's position during the Cakaudrove-Bau war in the early 1830s appears quite problematic, as described by Routledge (1985:58) and Young (1982). In other cases, local dissensions were exacerbated by outside events. For instance, Captain Knight of the *Spy* stated that Ovalau was split after the coup against Tanoa in Bau in 1832. One part of the island "declared in favour of one, the other part for the other" (Knights 1832-33).

## Chapter 4

### Surveyors (1820-1840)

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Although traders were acquainted with the Fijian archipelago from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the group remained mostly uncharted until the 1820s. The gap between economic interest and academic knowledge was striking. It encouraged European and American governments to send exploratory expeditions to the Pacific, with the surveying of the Fijian islands among their main missions. Such voyages brought a new category of *kai valagi* (Europeans) to Fiji. Surveyors, as they will be called here, were eager to fulfil their scientific duty as well as willing to reinforce the prestige of their home country. A core strategy of theirs was what we now call “ethnographic collecting.” As a result, extensive museum collections exist in relation to these voyages. Along with written accounts, they bear testimony to new academic concerns, such as physical anthropology, ethnography and art history — rather anachronistically named here. This chapter focuses on a few case studies only. Mainly, it draws attention to Dumont d’Urville’s first and second explorations of Fiji (1827 & 1838) and to Wilkes’ extensive survey of the archipelago (1840). It thus intends to give a precise insight into what happened from the 1820s to 1840s. Other collections and voyages will also be referenced, including Bellingshausen’s, Belcher’s and Denham’s expeditions, but these will not be as precisely contextualized as the main case studies. This chapter will call attention to new Western representations of Fiji, emerging from an increase of academic knowledge. Museum collections will be included in such representations, for they tell us much about Fijian, European and American exchange strategies, as well as about each side’s tastes, value systems and motivations.

#### Bellingshausen (Ono, August 1820)

Although Bellingshausen’s encounter with Fiji (Ono-i-Lau, August 1820) does not enter in this thesis’ methodological scope — Russia being neither a French- nor an English-speaking country (see chapter 1) — it cannot be completely overlooked. Indeed, it was a key step in European acquaintance with Fiji between eighteenth-century voyages and those about to be discussed. Bellingshausen’s voyage bears resemblances with British naval expeditions, such as Cook’s, with which it claimed filiations (Debenham 1945,

Barratt 1990). In terms of geography and cartography, Bellingshausen did not shed much more light on Fiji. Like Cook and Bligh, he only stopped briefly at one place, in this case Ono-i-Lau; and he did not go ashore. Academically speaking, however, the data he gathered is crucial. In particular, it announced a new era of European and American explorations of Fiji, concerned with ethnography, physical anthropology and art history. Cook's, Bligh's and d'Entrecasteaux's attempts in these matters had been rather shallow. Bellingshausen's descriptions of Ono and its inhabitants, along with pictorial documents and material artefacts, are consequently significant.

## Dumont d'Urville's first exploration (1827): a transition

"The noble love of glory, the desire to improve the knowledge of our globe, will be ... the principal goal; from now on acts of cruelty, often as useless as shameful, will not announce anymore the appearance of Europeans among any children of humanity."  
(Dumont d'Urville, 1830-35, I:X-XI, my translation)<sup>1</sup>

In many ways, Dumont d'Urville's first voyage to Fiji, in 1827, can be seen as a transition between eighteenth-century voyages of exploration and nineteenth-century surveys. In spirit, it was close to eighteenth-century enterprises. The French could only refer to old and inexact charts — mainly a traced replica of Tasman's route and a copy of Krusenstern's map.<sup>2</sup> Early narratives provided additional information. Yet, all these sources were far from complete or accurate. Actually, this situation probably kindled d'Urville's curiosity. In many respects, the commander of the *Astrolabe* was indeed more of an eighteenth-century enlightened spirit than a nineteenth-century military officer.<sup>3</sup> Open-minded and reluctant to use violence, he was eager to learn from his encounters with Pacific people. Another resemblance between Dumont d'Urville and his predecessors was the absence of a prolonged stopover in Fiji. Nevertheless, in less than a month of exploration, d'Urville and his men gathered more information on the Fijian archipelago than anybody had previously.

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<sup>1</sup> « Le noble amour de la gloire, le désir de perfectionner la connaissance de notre globe, (...) seront le principal but ; désormais des actes de cruauté souvent aussi inutiles qu'honteux ne signaleront plus l'apparition des Européens chez des peuples enfants. »

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Krusenstern never visited the Fijian archipelago. Yet, as Barratt explained (1990:85), his acquaintance with the Royal Navy allowed him to summarize quite accurately a number of "discoveries" that English navigators had made. A quite accurate map of the Pacific resulted, especially detailed for eastern Melanesia and its Polynesian fringes.

<sup>3</sup> In the first part of the nineteenth century all French official explorers belonged to the military as Navy officers.

### A complicated but fruitful journey

Though complicated, d'Urville's survey was fruitful. A map was drawn, and in spite of the blank area in the north-west, it was then the most accurate and complete chart of Fiji (Henderson 1933:256; Leclerc 2008, II:245). Due to poor weather no landing was made. Nonetheless, significant ethnographic data and artefacts were exchanged with Fijians who came on board the *Astrolabe*, or who met her in their canoes.

Both for the French government and for d'Urville, the survey of the Fijian islands was a decisive step that could not be omitted. The Maritime Minister had recommended 78 days devoted to that exploration (Dumont d'Urville, 1830-35, I:XXVIII), but things did not go as expected. Eventually, the *Astrolabe* spent 26 days within the group, from the 24th May to the 11th June 1827. Some obstacles had been anticipated. The reputation of the archipelago, its nautical dangers and ferocious inhabitants were known. However, most importantly, the material conditions were problematic and the morale of the crew was low. In the last stopover, at Tongatapu, the *Astrolabe* had nearly wrecked. Two men, including Dumont d'Urville's scientific assistant, had deserted and a very tense situation had deteriorated into violence. When she entered Fijian waters, the French corvette was missing anchors and ropes, and was running over four months late. As a final complication, the weather was terrible. However, both curiosity and professionalism led Dumont d'Urville to accomplish a mission it might have been wise to abandon.

### The myth of an unexplored area and the trade of artefacts of Western origin

Like many sailors of his time, Dumont d'Urville dreamt about being a new Cook. The relatively unknown Fijian group offered great hopes of major discovery. However, as soon as the French entered Fijian waters, the myth of an unexplored area began to fall apart. On 25th May 1827, two canoes departed from the reefs of Oqealevu and met the *Astrolabe*. On board were Tongans, resident on the island. Links between Tonga and Fiji were probably not a surprise for d'Urville who had read Cook and d'Entrecasteaux and visited Tonga himself. However, he probably did not anticipate that Fiji was part of such an extended network. The young chief leading the canoes was called "Mouki" (Muki?). He explained that he was under the protection of Tui Nayau, the ruling chief of Lau, and he mentioned that he had previously travelled to Port Jackson, New Zealand and Tahiti on a British vessel. When he noticed that the *Astrolabe* was missing anchors, he offered to lead the French to Lakeba where, he said, they could buy one small anchor, lost by an

American whaler a few months before — probably the *Oeno* (see Cary 1998). This cosmopolitan character and his companions, one of whom was a Micronesian from Guam who spoke Spanish, illustrated the scale of Fijian connections with the rest of the world in the late 1820s. Other examples were to be found in Lakeba, such as three Spaniards from Manila who accompanied a young chief of mixed Tongan and Fijian blood, “Loua-lala” (Lua), cousin of Tui Nayau (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:407).<sup>4</sup> The Spaniards were former sandalwood traders who had escaped the wreck of their ship, the *Conception* (*Ibid.*:412).



4.1— “Loua-Lala” (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:407)

Another evidence of regular contact with outsiders was the explicit value of Western goods, including firearms. These were soon mentioned by “Mouki” who explained his great influence on Tui Nayau because of the number of muskets he possessed. According to him, he had ten guns whereas his overlord only had six (*Ibid.*:400). We have mentioned in chapter 3 how much Fijians prized firearms as early as the 1820s. Dumont d’Urville was disillusioned by this:

“The grievous passion for firearms and powder seems to have spread around the globe; they have become the true currency of Polynesian savages.” (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:449, my translation)<sup>5</sup>

Upon realizing that Fiji was not as isolated as he had imagined, Dumont d’Urville understood he could utilize similar items he traded elsewhere in the Pacific. Some trade items had been provided by the French government for the purpose of barter with Pacific islanders (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, I:LIV). Here again, we find the two categories of Western trade goods previously mentioned: trifles and items with higher

<sup>4</sup> This young chief is most likely the one David Cargill later called Lua, whom he described as a “persecutor of Christians” (Schütz 1977:95, 112-113).

<sup>5</sup> “La passion funeste des armes à feu et de la poudre paraît avoir fait le tour du globe; ce dernier objet est devenu la véritable monnaie des sauvages de la Polynésie.”



exchange value. As trinkets, d'Urville traded glass beads and poor quality hardware, e.g. hatchets, nails, and sometimes razors and fish hooks. In the other category, pieces of fabric, garments, bottles, guns and powder were exchanged.

Commemorative medals were also distributed, following specific exchange patterns. As has already been explained with reference to Cook, such medallions were produced for each expedition. The *Astrolabe's* were in bronze, with the head of King Charles X on one side and details about the expedition on the other (see Astorkia 1985). From the European point of view, they were meaningful. They were used to obtain desired objects and as diplomatic gifts.

However, it was not sufficient to offer medals; they would have to be kept carefully and shown to other Europeans. Therefore, the honour of France being at stake, as well as his own name, it seems that d'Urville only gave medals to people he judged reliable and worthy. It was both distinctions and rewards that Dumont d'Urville distributed in the form of commemorative medals (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:428). Medals were also a way to express and secure partnerships.

Naturally, goods of Western origin did not only circulate from Europeans to Fijians. They were also exchanged among islanders, and sometimes they were traded back by native owners. The above-mentioned anchor is a case in point. Dumont d'Urville hoped to acquire it by exchange with "two muskets and a lot of powder" (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:408). Although useless to Fijians, it was obviously valued by their foreign visitors and therefore kept for the purpose of trade with them, like other pieces of wreckage (see also Dillon 2005). At Lakeba for instance, d'Urville acquired a copper medal from Bellingshausen's voyage. Interestingly enough, it had been acquired by Lua — perhaps as tribute — from a native of Ono who wore it around his neck. This example confirms the circulation of Western artefacts in the area, and also suggests that medals were valued by locals, like other chest ornaments. This medallion had been carefully kept and worn by a man (or men) who possessed it during the years following Bellingshausen's passage at Ono. At least, traces of use on its *verso* suggested this (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:411). This medal could be compared to inalienable artefacts, transmitted from generation to generation, such as *civavonovono* breastplates

(see chapters 1 and 3). It is also possible that the resemblance copper and silver medals<sup>6</sup> bore to *civa* breastplates, in colour, shape and use, contributed to their local value.

### Acquiring knowledge

Exchanged goods also shed light on what Dumont d'Urville was looking for in Fiji. Above all, the captain aimed to fulfil his missions, among which was the enquiry about Lapérouse's disappearance (1788). It is possible that Bellingshausen's medal had initially been wrongly identified as one of Lapérouse's (Guillon 1986:98).

As a surveyor, d'Urville looked for geographical data. As a scientist, he was concerned with what we may today call ethnology, physical anthropology and linguistics. Coming from an aristocratic family, he also valued manners and courtesy very much and cared about social hierarchy. Those interests are reflected in his behaviour and methods, as well as in the results he and other crew members obtained in Fiji. In fact, this is probably the main difference between traders, beachcombers and surveyors: their social background. Most surveyors, both naval officers and scientific crew, were highly educated. In their home country, they belonged to the elite. In France for instance, they had been trained in the best schools, such as Polytechnique or the Ecole Navale (see Zanco & Leclerc-Caffarel 2013). Such a social status, along with its academic history, moral codes and institutional associations, greatly influenced transactions with Fijians. In Fiji, d'Urville and others found many sources of intellectual satisfaction, but they were also confronted with profound and disturbing questionings about human nature (see below).

Here, one can see further similarities with eighteenth-century explorers, but in terms of hydrography, for example, nineteenth-century surveyors were much more concerned with the universality of their charts. Therefore, instead of systematically re-naming islands and reefs, they recorded local names as much as possible.<sup>7</sup> This method

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<sup>6</sup> Two types of medals were in use during Bellingshausen's voyage, silver ones being reserved for "important personages" (Debenham 1945, I:12). Bellingshausen gave both to Ono men, according to the hierarchy he observed (Barratt 1990:106-107).

<sup>7</sup> Some exceptions existed for places linked to special events or bearing specific historical value. For example, as homage to the "discoverer" of the islands, d'Urville was asked to preserve on his chart the name Tasman gave to the northern part of the archipelago (see chapter 2). Dumont d'Urville did so and named Tasman the channel which separates Taveuni and Qamea (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:422). Similarly, in memory of the danger the *Astrolabe* barely escaped, d'Urville named Kadavu's northern reef after his vessel.

required the guidance of locals, either foreign settlers or Fijians. It favoured both intellectual and material transactions.

D'Urville carefully recorded the names of his guides. "Mouki" and "Mediola" — from Guam — led the *Astrolabe* to Lakeba. The shipwrecked traders from the *Conception*, now mercenaries, also came on the French vessels until they left the archipelago with her. They served as interpreters for the duration of the visit. After Lakeba, the *Astrolabe* sailed north to Taveuni. There, d'Urville hoped to escape the archipelago as Wilson did, but he could not spot the passage mentioned by the Captain of the *Duff* in 1797 — which Henderson judged unsurprising (1933:30–33). D'Urville chose the safe option and returned south, following Bligh's route (1792) until he reached Moala. Violent winds had forced him to leave Lakeba without waiting for the anchor he desperately needed and with several natives onboard. Both Fijians and Tongans were, against their will, part of the voyage. Among them were high-ranking individuals, such as Lua, and a few important figures in Fijian history. For instance, d'Urville mentioned a young chief called "Tourenge-Toki" or "Sourangali" — i.e. Toki Soroaqali, brother of Tui Nayau, Malani. Unfortunately, d'Urville did not pay much attention to this character. In contrast, he talked highly about a young Fijian chief he called "Tomboua-Nakoro" — i.e. Tubuanakoro. This one presented himself as the nephew and envoy (*mataki*) of the "king" of Bau (Vunivalu), in charge of collecting Lakeba's tribute. Tubuanakoro was the eldest son of Tanoa Visawaqa, the younger brother of Naulivou, Vunivalu of Bau. He was thus in direct of succession to the Vunivalu title.<sup>8</sup> In d'Urville's narrative, Tubuanakoro was represented wearing European clothes, as well as a Fijian wig (*ulumate*):



4.2— "Tomboua-Nakoro" on board the *Astrolabe* (Routledge 1985:52, fig.7)

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, Tubuanakoro was killed during the Bauan rebellion against his father, in the early 1830s (Routledge 1985:51-52).

We will return to the reactions provoked by the *Astrolabe*'s unexpected departure from Lakeba. Obviously, Tubuanakoro did not take offense. Being without doubt acquainted with the presence of *kai valagi* in the archipelago, and following the policy of his uncle towards them, he probably saw an opportunity to exchange and build new partnerships with foreigners. With the help of Spanish interpreters, he gave the Captain and the naturalists (Quoy and Gaimard) significant information to better understand the Fijian islands, not only geographically but also politically and culturally. D'Urville considered him "largely above all the savages I had observed so far," in terms of manners, knowledge as well as behaviour (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:427). When he finally went ashore, on Moala, with most of the unfortunate passengers, Tubuanakoro was offered by d'Urville an adze, two fathoms of blue woollen cloth and a medal of the expedition, which the Captain hung around his neck (*Ibid.*:428).

### *Geographical and ethnographic knowledge*

Despite the fact that d'Urville did not land in Fiji, the data he obtained from Tubuanakoro and others allowed him to sketch a fairly accurate portrait of the Fijian islands from the 1820s. Many observations were geographical and geophysical. D'Urville described the islands he encountered, with locations, dimensions and reliefs. He also evaluated the potential fertility of their soil and the possible presence of inhabitants. By doing so, he upheld his role of surveyor but, at the same time, he provided the French government with clues about potential places where a colonial settlement could be envisaged. It was a secret plan of the French to build somewhere in the South Pacific a penal colony, similar to the British one in Port Jackson. This colonial prospect was part of d'Urville's duty as the Minister's instructions in the Navy archives show (SHM, Mf. BB4 1002). Yet, interestingly, this specific part is missing from the instructions published along with the narrative (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35). It is notable that, studying people's customs and behaviours, as well as their openness to European settlement, was also part of the aim.

From an ethnographic viewpoint, what was recorded was surprisingly rich and accurate — as far as we can judge from comparison with subsequent documents and modern ethnography. This was most likely due to the cooperation of Tubuanakoro and the Spaniards (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:696). Of course, some cultural aspects were directly observed, such as the good care and pride that Fijian chiefs took in their

hair. On the other hand, in Gaimard's journal many details about Fijian religion and daily life exceed what could have been eye-witnessed. For example, the *yaqona* ritual, marriage and initiation were mentioned. Some specific practices like circumcision and tattooing were described, as well as social statuses (e.g. kingship, priesthood, womanhood, slavery). Material culture was also documented, including the making and use of barkcloth and the production of ceramic pots. Gaimard also recorded proper names. Very complete lists resulted from his work, such as the names of kings and of inhabited and uninhabited islands, often in both Tongan and Fijian languages. (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:698-726).

### *Political understanding*

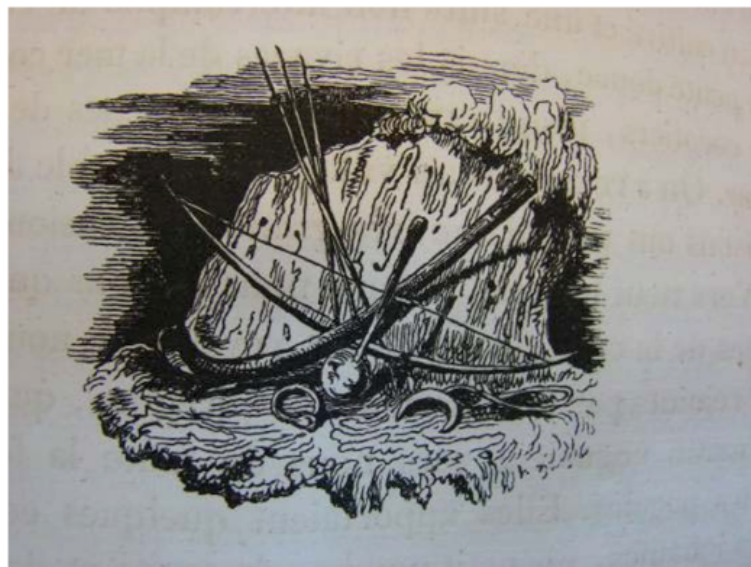
Dumont d'Urville's account, along with the extracts of Quoy and Gaimard's journals, can also be considered as a pertinent insight into the Fijian political situation in 1827, during the chiefship of Naulivou (Vunivalu of Bau) and Malani (Tui Nayau). Bau's paramount family was described. Tubuanakoro explained that, when the current "king" of Bau would die, his younger brother (Tubuanakoro's father) would succeed him. Gaimard wrote the name of Tubuanakoro's father as "Bisa-Ouanka," which was indeed (Tanoa) Visawaqa. Tubuanakoro also referred to his young half-brother, whom Gaimard named "Serrou" (Seru) and was later known as Cakobau. Most characters and islands that d'Urville met had relations to Bau (d'Urville's spelling: "Imbao"), whether as vassals or enemies. For example, Lakeba and Moala were both tributaries to Bau. Several other peoples, from the north (Cakaudrove) and the south-west of the archipelago (Nadroga) were on the other hand overtly enemies of Naulivou and his lineage (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:413 & 449).

Dumont d'Urville also depicted Lakeba. Apart from a few accidental contacts, the head island of Lau had been rather overlooked by Westerners. Above all, Lakeba was the hub of Fiji-Tonga interrelations (see also chapter 2, 5 and Kaeppler 1978b). D'Urville carefully recorded examples of miscegenation and first tried to understand the nature and extent of that cohabitation. For instance, he noticed that only two of Lakeba's ten villages were inhabited by Tongans. Though not easy to confirm, this information gives a rough estimate of the Tongan population in Lakeba in 1827. It suggests that Tongan settlement was limited. Actually, in Dumont d'Urville's descriptions, Tongans appear mostly as guests among Fijians, though quite influential guests. For example, the

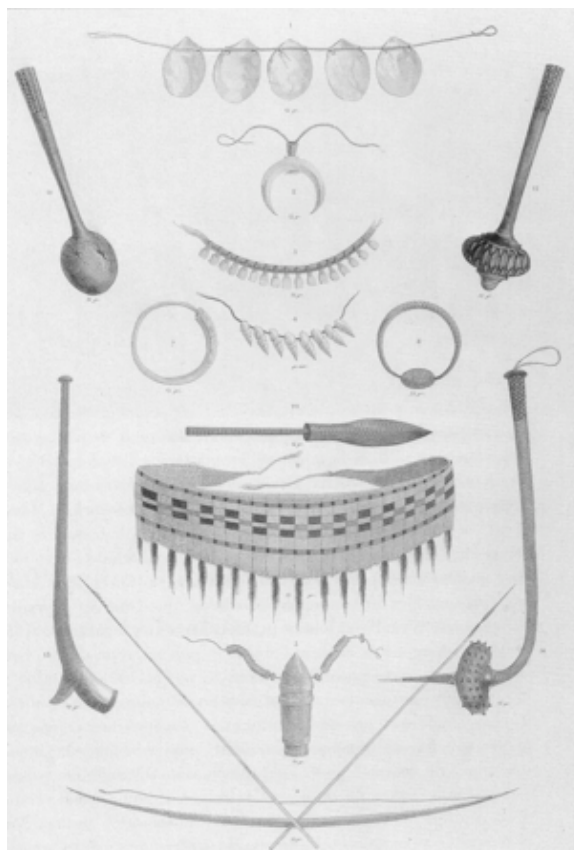
Tongans of Lakeba who remained on the *Astrolabe* seemed afraid of Fijians from other islands, where they said they would not be welcome (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:415). Those few examples show evidence of a rather fragile integration, and highlight the position of Lakeba as a pivot between Tonga and Fiji. Nevertheless, the Tongan connections were still an important context for the first interactions between French and Fijian men. And indeed, in spite of the disappointment he had experienced in Tongatapu, Dumont d'Urville relied on Tongans more than on Fijians, whose cannibal reputation was a major concern (*Ibid.*:406). He gladly used the guidance and mediation of Tongans to first become acquainted with the islands and their inhabitants.

### Diplomatic gifts and valuables

Some objects acquired during d'Urville's first survey of Fiji were depicted and came to illustrate the official publication. A vignette within the text and a detailed plate in the atlas provide evidence of what had been traded. Some artefacts were illustrated twice. Most of them are not mentioned in d'Urville's text. Yet, pieces made with pearl-shell (*civa*) or whale ivory (*tabua*) must have been highly precious (see chapter 3).



4.3— Weapons and other objects collected in Fiji, 1827  
(Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:452)



4.4— “Objets des îles Viti” (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, Atlas I: pl.XC)

### *Ivory and ivory inlaid artefacts*

The French crew knew the value of whale’s teeth in Fiji. Gaimard, for instance, considered that they were “diamonds in this country” (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:726). He also explicitly mentioned how they were related to social status (*Ibid.*:700-701). With reference to the previous chapter, one may conclude that in 1827 whale ivory was highly valuable and barely accessible to Westerners. Yet, it seems that the *Astrolabe*’s crew had access to a few objects made with ivory.

The pendant n°3 on the above plate is simply described as a “neck ornament.” It, however, looks as if it had been made of whale ivory and shell beads, both materials highly valued in the 1820s. Unfortunately, no object matching the illustration has been found — and from the picture one could actually question its Fijian origin. The club on its right, on the other hand, has already been mentioned in chapter 1. This *totokia vonotabua* shows typical ivory inlays in the shape of stars and crescent moons, most likely the work of Tongan canoe builders at work in eastern Fiji (Clunie 2003a:89, fig.119). Its pointed end seems made of ivory as well, which is unusual. Today, this artefact is most likely kept at the Musée du quai Branly (72.84.269). Although it was not



recorded in old inventories and in spite of minor differences between the plate and the actual item discussed in chapter 1, the coincidences are too numerous to be overlooked. Objects of this kind were no doubt highly valued in 1827. No act of “negative reciprocity” (Sahlins 1972:195) having been related in the narrative, it must have been either a prestigious gift or an expensive purchase. Dumont d’Urville’s remarks about the prices that Fijians demanded, in Nadroga, is in favour of the gift hypothesis. In fact, in his general description of Fijian weapons, d’Urville mentioned more than one club inlaid with ivory or human teeth. Yet, it seems that none of them truly retained his attention, except for throwing clubs (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:452).

### *Civa shells*

Similarly, the necklace made of five *civa* shells, at the top of the plate XC (n°6), is worthy of note. It, too, is identifiable in the MQB’s collection (72.56.730), and it is traceable in old museum inventories. There, it accompanies another artefact (72.56.731) made of four polished shells, carefully carved in a pointed shape that seems reminiscent of turtle’s shells. Two shells of 72.56.730 present decorative incisions in their middle, along with several levels of polish. It was explained in the previous chapters that *civa* and turtle associations were synonymous with precious and *tabu* objects in the 1820s. Furthermore, *civa* shells were usually worn as single breastplates. Necklaces made of several shells are exceptional in museum collections. Yet, again, Dumont d’Urville did not mention them. He only reported that shells were used in necklaces and bracelets, without further precision (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, IV:446).



4.5— MQB, 72.56.730



4.6— MQB, 72.56.731

In fact, these two specimens raise a number of questions as to their origin. Although unique in Fijian collections and indubitably acquired in Fiji — which the above



plate and early museum inventories attest — they bear resemblances with Polynesian artefacts. For instance, assemblages of pearl-shells may be observed in Cook’s collections. A few artefacts are notably related to Cook’s last passage to Tahiti. They include one necklace in Göttingen (Georg August University, OZ 404 a & b) and a similar specimen in Herrnhut, made of three polished mussel shells (Völkerkundemuseum n°68671). The latter was exhibited in Bonn in 2009, along with a watercolour inspired by Webber (the artist on Cook’s third expedition). The painting depicts a Tahitian dancer and is now in Canberra (NLA, R148) (Kaeppeler 2009:154-155, fig.114&118). In addition, a Tahitian mourning costume in Bern comprises a similar artefact (Kaeppeler 2009:143-144, fig.64). Such Tahitian necklaces, however, present three perforations on each shell, while d’Urville’s pieces only have two, like *civa* breastplates.

On the other hand, Krüger referred to a painting by William Hodges (the artist during Cook’s second voyage) in his identification of Göttingen’s necklace (Little *et al.* 2006, I:4–5; II:54). This picture represents an old Tongan man, wearing a necklace made of several shells (Joppien & Smith 1988, II:184, fig.2.76). These look like they have been pierced only twice. By comparison, d’Urville’s specimens could therefore be Western rather than Eastern Polynesian. And, none of this could contradict a high value in Fiji in the 1820s. In any event, these specimens provide us with good examples of connections between Western and Eastern Polynesia.

As Dumont d’Urville did not write about them, the circumstances in which these necklaces were acquired are unknown; but hypotheses can be formulated. Regarding their high value, they must have been *diplomatic gifts* to d’Urville from a high-ranking partner, i.e. acts of “balanced reciprocity” (Sahlins 1972:193-195). Material exchanges only occurred in three places, at Lakeba, off the south coast of Vitilevu (Nadroga) — see below — and aboard the *Astrolabe*. In Lakeba itself, the exchange activity with Fijians and Tongans seemed brief and superficial. Material exchanges must have been quite marginal, less fruitful in any event than those between the French and the inhabitants of Nadroga, whose canoes met the *Astrolabe* on the 8th and 9th June 1827. D’Urville may have received the necklaces from the chief he met there, and whom he described as eager to barter — even insistent — apparently looking for possible allies. Yet, temporary passengers such as Tubuanakoro might have given the necklaces to d’Urville too, during the voyage to Moala. However, if this had been the case, why would d’Urville not

mention such gifts? Would he not have understood their value, as he thought so highly of his informant and closely communicated with him?

In contrast, the chief he met off Vitilevu appears as a strong possibility. He was high-ranking (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:447) and traded extensively with the French. "Ounong-Lebou,"<sup>9</sup> as Dumont d'Urville called him, supplied the *Astrolabe* with food and specimens of "local industry," including pieces of barkcloth (*Ibid.*:446).<sup>10</sup> Acquainted with Western goods (*Ibid.*:447-48), he and his people were determined and exigent exchange partners, with very clear strategies and goals in mind. They were not interested in glass beads or fabric, but rather in guns, powder and metal tools (*Ibid.*:449 & 451). On the 9th of June, a group of "Ounong-Lebou's" canoes approached the *Astrolabe* for the second time. It is likely that the Fijians hoped to establish a strong partnership, which might have helped them to become involved in commerce with *kai valagi*. Also, the French might have been seen as a potential assistance in their struggle with Bau (*Ibid.*:447). On the second day, in order to obtain a gun, "Ounong-Lebou" offered d'Urville a pig and a woman (*Ibid.*:452). Women were powerful "alliance makers" (Lévi-Strauss 1967), notably in Fiji's old times when polygamous chiefs had many wives to help them establish and maintain political alliances, via kinship relations (see Hooper 2013:116) including *vasu* privileges (Sahlins 2004:221-244). Seen this way, women were high diplomatic gifts. Hogs were also highly valued, from both sides. They were demonstrative gifts or expensive purchases in the 1820s (chapter 3). Following that trend, other diplomatic gifts might have been made, such as valuable ornaments. Yet, because he did not understand their value and because they would not have been as shocking as the presentation of a woman to him, d'Urville may have barely noticed, ignored or simply forgotten them. Though less probable, other members of the crew could have acquired the necklaces too, in exchange for firearms. Unfortunately, without the officers' journals, that hypothesis is impossible to validate.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lebou is probably the transcription of *Levu* which means big, great, etc. Therefore, there are chances that what Dumont d'Urville understood as a name was a title or a description for a head chief, given to him in eastern Fijian, "turaga levu," a formulation recorded by Richardson as early as 1811 (Richardson 1811-12). This character provided islands names and many other data. For that help, he received a medal (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35, IV:447-450).

<sup>10</sup> Several of pieces of barkcloth are kept in the MQB. Most are plain white, but one (71.1909.19.132 Oc) shows a distinctive pattern often found in collections from the 1820s-1840s as I have discussed elsewhere (MQB, 7th April 2011). For further information about that artefact see Leclerc 2007:93; 2008, II:254.

<sup>11</sup> As usual, the commander of the expedition had been solely appointed with the official publication. For that purpose, he compiled all data gathered during the journey. To keep a proper diary was part of each officer's mission; to eventually collate them was that of the captain. Dumont d'Urville did so, but the

Clunie recently reported the existence of a possibly similar item at Vulaga, in the 1980s. This information was collected from Kepueli Cirimaitoga, at Suva, 22nd October 1986, and refers to a circlet of 3 *civa*:

“Three *civa* were found on the chest of a skeleton in a burial cave called Qaraikula. Another cave, Qaranimoli, has an old piece of canoe inside it. The skeleton was lying on a mat with a *kali* and a club. There was a spear above it in the cave. The *civa* were worn round the neck in a curve like a necklace. Anare Matahau took two of the *civa*, Kepueli had the other. The spear and club were taken away and have been lost; the *kali* is still there with the remains.

“Kepueli thought the remains were associated with two twin roosters from Tonga – Cirinikaumoli and Kausabaria [the celebrated twins generally said to have shot Degei's bird, Turukawa — the attribution to Tonga is interesting] — who came looking for Turukawa. One returned to Tonga, but the other stayed at Vulaga.” (Clunie, personal communication, 3rd September 2013)

The association of the above artefact with Vulaga and Tonga might plead in favour of a Tongan or eastern Fijian donor for d'Urville's necklaces. Lua or Soroaqali would fit that description. Yet, again, things circulated a lot in the area, especially between Tonga and the eastern coast of Vitilevu, and among chiefly personages from both archipelagos.

Since d'Urville barely mentioned what was exchanged during this trip, what he recorded must be considered significant, for it sheds light on important exchange patterns and exchange values. In particular, the French valued things that could help to fulfil the *Astrolabe*'s mission: food supplies such as pigs, naval equipment such as the anchor, and evidence of previous European visits to Fiji (medals). Immaterial data was also gathered, in order to improve knowledge of the area. Finally, the opportunity was taken to acquire a few objects of “local industry,” including some weapons, barkcloths and a few body ornaments. On the other hand, obsessed with his own duty and quests, it seems that d'Urville did not pay much attention to Fijian desire to contract alliances with Westerners.

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journals never reappeared. Consequently, what is known about this expedition mostly portrays d'Urville's viewpoint.

## Dumont d'Urville and Wilkes' surveys (1838 & 1840)

In October 1838 (13th to 28th), Dumont d'Urville returned to Fiji. Less than two years later, the U.S. Exploring Expedition (1838-42), often called the "Wilkes expedition" after its leader, spent three months in the archipelago (6th May-11th August 1840). While providing important insights into the late 1830s Fijian situation, these surveys can also be compared with the first voyage of the *Astrolabe*, and other trips (Bellingshausen's, Belcher's and Denham's). They thus shed light on the evolution of exchange patterns between Fijians and Western officials and emphasize similarities and differences between commanders' approaches.

## Conditions of exchange from the 1820s onward

In little more than a decade, there had been significant political developments in Fiji, and subsequently, major changes occurred. The power of Bau had been contested but finally reinforced. Tanoa, the current Vunivalu of Bau, had recovered his position with the help of his son Seru (Cakobau). What is known in the literature as the "Bauan rebellion" had now ended (Derrick 1957:59-60). The foreigners who visited the islands in the late 1830s considered Tanoa Visawaqa as a prevailing chief, even though his hold on power remained fragile. Despite this uncertainty and a conflict between Bau and Somosomo, the last years of the 1830s and the early 1840s were a period of relative stability in Fiji, in comparison with the war that followed between Bau and Rewa, from about 1843 to 1855 (Routledge 1985:68-88; Sahlins 2004). In parallel, contact between Fijians and Westerners had increased considerably.

Both d'Urville and Wilkes' assignments were adapted to this new context. Though both expeditions were considered mainly scientific, the strategic, political, and military dimensions were now considerable. The promotion and protection of national interests were among their principal missions. In short, they aimed to render the place safe for their fellow citizens by providing accurate and complete charts, while also promoting their national interests.

Other repercussions were material in nature. This time, d'Urville had two ships, the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée*, while the Wilkes expedition comprised four vessels from its original six-ship fleet: the flagship *Vincennes*, with the *Peacock*, *Porpoise* and *Flying-Fish*. Proportionally, the potential room available for the storage of specimens and the

number of observers had increased. Now, the explorers were eager to interact with Fijians in a more in-depth way and had the material means to facilitate their aims.

### Ethnographic collections and trading strategies

The ethnographic collections from d'Urville and Wilkes's voyages are among the most important historical collections from Fiji. The Wilkes collection is especially huge. The Fijian artefacts easily comprise the largest part of the Wilkes ethnographic collection, with around 1200 objects brought back to the United States in 1842. With a number of artefacts that significant, in spite of possible dispersion among crew members and notwithstanding the loss of the specimens held by the *Peacock*, which was wrecked in British Columbia in July 1841, it is without doubt the biggest Fijian collection made before the colonial period. By chance, the artefacts were carefully inventoried by the expedition's ornithologist, Titian Peale. Completed in 1846, the "Peale catalogue" is quite detailed and rigorously organised by geographic areas (Peale 1846). Most Fijian items (more than 800) are still kept in Washington, D.C., where they were first exhibited in the 1850s (Viola & Margolis 1985:119-121, 123-127). They are now at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Smithsonian Institution (SI).<sup>12</sup> What was gathered by the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée* is hardly quantifiable. Deposits of around 100 Fijian items were made in 1841 to the Louvre.<sup>13</sup> Yet, no more than the half were actually recorded two years later in the Musée de Marine's inventory. Some missing objects found their way into other museums, such as the Muséum d'histoire naturelle (Museum of Natural History) of La Rochelle (see Leclerc 2008). Other artefacts were never registered, since they were considered as sailors' private collections. Some sailors made subsequent donations to their hometowns. For example, the collection of Gaston de Rocquemaurel (second-in-command on the *Astrolabe*) is kept in Toulouse (MNHT) (Leclerc-Caffarel 2013). Others are still in private hands, such as the collection of Vincendon-Dumoulin (cartographer during d'Urville's second trip), partially auctioned in 2003 (Gros & Delettiez & Voutier 2003). From Dumont d'Urville's personal collection, very few pieces remain, if any. He most likely donated them to his hometown, Caen (Normandy), but the city was largely destroyed during the Second World War.

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<sup>12</sup> Dr Jane Walsh documented the US Exploring Expedition's objects in the NMNH's collection in the 1980s. This endeavour resulted in a very helpful website :

[http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/usexex/html/object\\_about.htm](http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/usexex/html/object_about.htm)

<sup>13</sup> The Louvre hosted the Musée de Marine (Naval Museum).

However, similar phenomena probably occurred around Wilkes' voyage and, even in proportion to the time that each expedition spent in Fiji (3 months versus 2 weeks), the French collection cannot rival that of the Americans. As their background was quite similar, it is probable that their respective approaches made the difference.<sup>14</sup>

### *Exchanged goods and trading techniques*

From d'Urville's account, and from the officers' journals,<sup>15</sup> it seems that the French did not follow any conventions during their exchanges with Fijians. Distinctions were made between high-ranking individuals, helpful informants and commoners, but d'Urville does not seem to have formally devoted specific kinds of objects to specific types of transactions (or transactors). Likely, a certain freedom surrounded the Fijian-French interactions. The following quote, extracted from a published letter by Lieutenant Reynolds of the Wilkes expedition, highlights the contrast between d'Urville and Wilkes' trading strategies:

"The natives were now permitted to come alongside to trade... For bottles we could get cocoa nuts, yams, bows and arrows, and other trifles. Red paint was highly valued, and hatchets, plane Irons, knives, razors, scissors, fishhooks, looking glasses, calico, beads were a stock with which you could buy any thing in Fegee. Muskets, powder, lead, whale's teeth, and chests with locks were things most valued, but these are only used as presents, or given in payment for Tortoise Shell or for the hire of those engaged in gathering bich le mer." (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:164)

This passage is completed by the following note by the editor:

"Trading from the ships of the squadron was strictly regulated. The islanders were invited to come only at a certain time of day, when a white signal flag was raised. The purser or other officer of each vessel was designated as trade master, and all transactions were to be made through him and exchanges rates set by him. Food was acquired by trading small manufactured items, as were many ethnographic specimens collected by the scientifics... Chiefs were invited aboard to receive more valuable objects as gifts. Wilkes's predecessor Thomas ap C. Jones had requested these trade items in a memorandum to the secretary of the navy (1837), which included a list of goods desired at the Pacific islands prepared by a merchant Captain Egleston." (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:164)

Charles Wilkes was a man of rules, which can be related both to his need for control and to his anxiety about Fijians. In order to prevent any incident, he tried to limit

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<sup>14</sup> One must remember that, historically and recently alike, "a great number of artefacts is important for the prestige of a collection and its collector" (Schindlbeck 1993:64).

<sup>15</sup> Dumont d'Urville was again in charge of the official publication, but he died before the end of the project. Clément Vincendon-Dumoulin and Charles Hector Jacquinot were successively appointed to this endeavour. D'Urville's accidental death may explain the preservation of all journals besides his.

interactions between the crew and Fijians as much as possible, especially interactions that were not carefully supervised:

“I must confess I felt great anxiety for the safety of our parties in the boats, and issued the foregoing orders very particularly, in order to avoid all misapprehension, and to leave as little as possible to the discretion of the officers who had charge of the boats. They were all well armed...” (Wilkes 1845, III:56) <sup>16</sup>

Based on the following account, some may conclude that Wilkes’ anxiety was well-founded. Others would suggest that obvious mistrust resulted in questionable practices for securing transactions, which were ultimately triggers for violent events (see chapter 3 and last section in this chapter).

Reynolds’ statement is confirmed in Wilkes’ narrative and documents the value of Western exchanged goods in 1840. Changes and continuity are observable in comparison with earlier transactions with traders and explorers. Bows and arrows are, for instance, numerous in the Wilkes’ collection, which suggests that they were easy to acquire (see Schindlbeck 1993:62). Some of these had already been obtained by traders, but they are quite difficult to identify in museum collections, having been often much neglected and mixed with pieces with other provenances. In any event, they were now in open competition with the new *dakai* (musket). So far, food was quite easily obtainable. It still was when Fijians wanted bottles and “trifles,” but the U.S. sailors were soon to realize how dependant on Fijians they were for basic sustenance — as would the missionaries. Bottles did not seem valuable any more in 1840, while they were successfully traded by d’Urville and American merchants until the late 1830s. For instance, in 1838 Dumont d’Urville reported the gift he made to Tanoa of “two bottles he desired for a while,” suggesting they were prestigious trading items (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, IV:212). Could they have been devalued between 1838 and 1840? It is also possible that d’Urville wrongly estimated the importance of the gift he made to the Vunivalu of Bau, as he had done before. Similarly, Reynolds and his counterparts may have exchanged valuable things without paying attention to what they were worth to Fijians, as Americans did not prize such objects.

The usual stock of trade items from the West was still in use (e.g. metal tools, textiles and beads). “Looking glasses,” i.e. mirrors, already bartered by traders, seem to have been considered highly valued, and so was “red cloth” (Wilkes 1845, IV:49).

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<sup>16</sup> Examples of such instructions can be found in an appendix to the account (Wilkes 1845, III: 424-428).



4.7— FM, 78.1564

Although not mentioned here, another category of Western valuables were spyglasses. At the Fiji Museum, there is one telescope on which it is written: “Telescope of Ratu Mara, a present from the United States Exploring Expedition 1838-42” (FM 78.1564). This would have belonged to Mara Kapaiwai, a Bauan chief and rebel already mentioned in chapter 3. Mara Kapaiwai was a parallel cousin of Cakobau, being the son of Vuibureta, himself son of Banuve Baleivavalagi and brother of Tanoa Visawaqa — both of them Vunivalu of Bau (Derrick 1957:108). Via his mother, Adi Mere Veisaca, he was *Vasulevu* to Lakeba. He was put to death by his parallel cousin, Cakobau, in June 1859. After he converted to Christianity, Calvert described him as a very influential character in Fiji (Calvert 2003:316-318). In any event, this telescope did not enter a museum collection until the late 1970s, i.e. almost 140 years after its acquisition.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore likely that it was regarded as an inalienable *iyau*, and to some extent still is.

More original in Reynolds’ list were the “chests with locks,” while “red paint” seems to have been of continuous interest to Fijians. Among other valuables of Western origin, watches may be added, since they were mentioned by Wilkes along with tobacco (1845, III:61). Interestingly, none of those objects were reported in d’Urville’s account. The divergence is probably due to the way Americans prepared the Fijian survey. Indeed, if the American traders needed official surveyors to render their business safer,

<sup>17</sup> As far as one may judged, without being a specialist, this specimen resembles similar items found in naval museums from the same period.



they also provided them with significant help by sharing their knowledge about the islands, including what was exchangeable and valuable there from the early 1800s.

Finally, the extensive trade of whale's teeth made a huge difference with d'Urville's previous voyage. The late 1830s and early 1840s were certainly the climax of the whale ivory industry in Fiji. At that time, it was still highly valuable, although trends may have already been leading to the saturation and devaluation of the market.

Another thing that Reynolds exemplifies in his letter, is the climate of shared enthusiasm in which most exchanges were made, in Ovalau in this case:

"It was an everlasting source of amusement to witness the traffic that was continually going on: every man and boy in the Ship was busy from morn till night in procuring edible things, as well as such articles as would be deemed curious at Home, and the Ship was a Babel of tongues... We were as eager to buy as our sable friends were to sell, and they had such strong fancies for our goods that they readily parted with every thing in their canoes..." (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:164-165)

A similar effervescence was described during Dumont d'Urville's 1838 visit. Thus, Rocquemaurel, second-in-command on the *Astrolabe*, wrote.

"We were eager to acquire their weapons, potteries and the other products of their industry, which is, beyond question, superior to that of Polynesians, despite the disgrace usually associated with everything from darker races."<sup>18</sup> (Dumont d'Urville 1845-54, IV:387, my translation).

The last part of this statement, and similar prejudices, will be discussed at the end of this chapter. For now, it is likely that both Fijians and Euro-American surveyors wanted to trade and acquire the other's goods. The accounts and collections provide evidence of what was offered to Fijians and what was bought in exchange. They also inform us about Western officials' motivations and requests.

### *Systematic and selective collections*

In both the French and the American case, the idea of building a collection for testimony prevailed, but an essential difference existed between French and American "collecting" strategies. While the French collections seem to result from a selection, the American ones were apparently made more systematically.

The Wilkes collection contains a very large number of artefacts of the same kind. Bows (*dakai*) and arrows (*gasau*) were mentioned previously. Though not considered

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<sup>18</sup> « Nous recherchions avec empressement leurs armes, leurs poteries et les autres produits de leur industrie, qui est, sans contredit, supérieure à celle des Polynésiens, malgré l'espèce de défaveur qui est attachée à tout ce qui tient aux races plus foncées en couleur. »

valuable, they were extensively collected. Similarly, the number of clubs in the collection is astonishing, as well as that of women's skirts (*liku*). Great variety is visible among those series of artefacts, and as we will see later it is a blessing for the analysis of 1840s material culture. Yet, many artefacts being quite similar they were often considered duplicates throughout the collection's history (Walsh 2004). In contrast, the French collections seem to be made of selected samples. Most objects are represented in quite limited quantity but do allow room for a lot of variety. A few skirts, two or three necklaces, some wooden dishes and only a few bows, arrows and spears are found in the French collections. This observation raises two questions: How did the French make their choices? Did the Americans not select between objects at all?

Firstly, it must be remembered that both American and French acquisitions depended, largely, on indigenous agencies. They acquired only what could be obtained via exchanges, i.e. acts of "balanced reciprocity" (Sahlins 1972:193-195). Some objects were inalienable, including a number of *iyau* made with ivory. And when violence was used, the result was never a fruitful plunder. Fijians usually ran away with their valuables or destroyed them (see below). Nevertheless, within what was exchanged, choices were made. The available space aboard, of course, limited the sailors. In addition, though ethnography had grown in importance, it was probably not a priority in comparison with natural sciences, whose collected specimens also required space. Finally, in contrast to the civilian American scientific crew, scientists and navy officers were the same persons aboard the French ships (Leclerc 2008:38).

Science was part of the duty and education of French officers. This combination of military and scientific skills may explain a certain methodology that applied to all collecting endeavours. Of course, being methodological implied referring to specific criteria. Those are not easy to identify for ethnographic collecting, as they were not as clearly defined as in other disciplines. Instructions merely suggest the acquisition of "samples" of local productions. Nevertheless, some more or less explicit and subconscious criteria may be acknowledged (see also Leclerc-Caffarel 2013).

In French collections, weapons are quite numerous. For example, they represent 48% of the Fijian items deposited at the Louvre in 1841 (Leclerc 2008, II:264, 299). Some could argue that weapons were trivial and easy to acquire from the late 1770s onwards. Obviously a number of them were indeed alienable. Yet, some weapons, including clubs, were indubitably highly precious from a Fijian viewpoint, to the extent

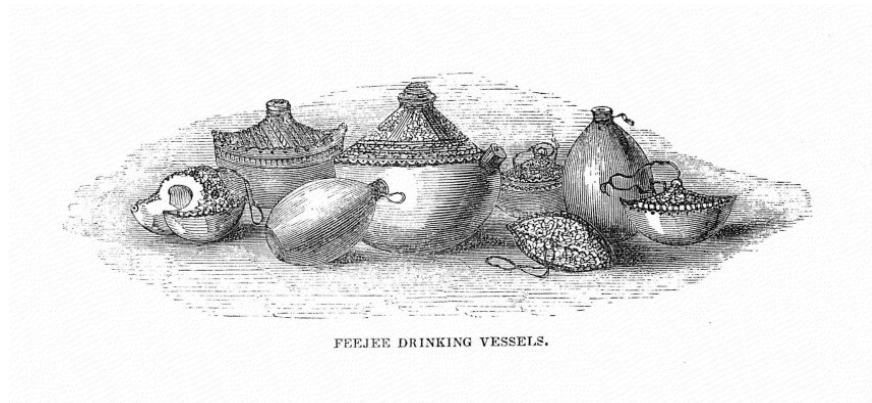
that they were used as *soro* (ritual demand/apology) or offerings to local gods (Clunie 2003b:13). In fact, the fascination exerted by Fijian weapons on Europeans illustrates more than their exchangeability. Clubs especially were related to the reputation of Fijians, known as fierce warriors and cannibals from the late eighteenth century. Sailors wanted to bring back souvenirs related to those European imaginaries, which also emphasized their bravery.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Fijian traditional weapons were objects of wonder. Elaborately decorated and diverse, they had assets to seduce educated nineteenth-century officers, especially those influenced by the emergence of art history and looking for evidence of Fijian cultural advancement (see Schindlbeck 1993:61, 63).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, art history started to fascinate intellectuals. Like ethnography, it was soon related to questions about the origin of mankind and pre-evolutionist ideas. It began to catch the attention of those who theorised stages of cultural development. The history of humankind was indeed conceived into an on-going process of evolution and decadence. Social organisation, religion, but also art, started to be regarded as evidence of this evolution. In art history, one major question was that of the origin of art. When could a material production be considered art? In the nineteenth century, the answer was to be found in the ornamentation. As soon as something was decorated, it could be judged within an art-historical sequence (for examples see Denon & Duval 1829; Owen 2001). French navy officers were without doubt sensitive to those new debates, and the selection of Fijian artefacts they made can be related to those. Pieces of weaponry, ornaments, furniture and ceramic vessels were in high demand in Fiji during the late 1830s and early 1840s.

The production of varnished earthenware especially attracted French attention. The forms, sizes and ornamentations of Fijian pots were elaborate. In addition, after firing the craftswomen rubbed the warm pots with resin (*makadre*), extracted from the pine tree *dakua* (*Agathis Vitiensis*). This operation rendered the pots partially waterproof and gave them a fine glazed finish. The French were amazed to find such sophisticated ware in Fiji. Ignorant of the technique, they believed it was faience or glazed ceramic, which could rival Chinese or European potteries.

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<sup>19</sup> This, however, cannot be retained as a unique criterion for the acquisition of weapons in Fiji. See note n°13 in chapter 2.



4.8— “Drinking vessels” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:146)

The following passage from Rocquemaurel’s log book (ANF, Mf. 5JJ144) exemplifies the French fascination and desire for Fijian ceramics. Interestingly, he mixes comments on Fijian artistic development with remarks on cannibalism and other eating habits. Like the question of races, illustrated before, these were criteria for ranking societies on an evolutionary scale.

“The production of glazed ceramic vases of any form and dimension, which can be compared to our largest vases, allow us to think that Vitians have an industry at least as developed as that of peoples who do not know how to model clay.... It is even possible to affirm that this production, which is beyond simple common pottery, is as advanced in this country as in Europe. Now, Vitians only have to learn how to vary forms to make those pots more suitable for daily uses, because their dishes and plates are still very basic wooden containers, gently carved. I have seen on one of those vases a small hole for the salt; which proves that these cannibals are not as disgusted as we first thought by salty food.”<sup>20</sup> (Rocquemaurel 1837-40, my translation)

Pottery was also used in local trade (Cary 1998[1887]:55) and beyond. It was also sought by the members of the American squadron, yet not with the same enthusiasm as their French counterparts, to the Fijians’ disappointment:

“They all, therefore, left Rewa for the ship, and on the way down the river, stopped at the small village of Vatia to purchase some earthenware; this is a village of potters. They were at once surrounded by several hundreds of the inhabitants, all pressing their wares on them, of which they bought several specimens, but not enough to satisfy the vendors, who, when they found that the officers did not intend to purchase more, hooted and shouted many offensive epithets, that only became known through the interpreter's report.” (Wilkes 1845, IV:133)

<sup>20</sup> « Le fait seul de la fabrication des vases en terre vernissée, de toutes formes et de dimensions qui atteignent celles de nos plus grands vases, annonce, de la part des Vitians, une industrie au moins égale à celle des peuplades qui n’ont pas su comme eux pétrir l’argile.... On peut même soutenir que cette industrie, en tant qu’elle n’embrasse que la simple poterie en terre la plus commune, est aussi avancée dans ce pays qu’en Europe même. Il ne manque aux Vitians qu’à varier un peu les formes de leurs vases pour les approprier aux besoins de la vie. Ainsi leurs plats et leurs assiettes sont encore de petits baquets ou des plateaux en bois durs assez gentiment sculptés. J’ai vu un de ces vases dont un petit compartiment servait à mettre le sel ; ce qui prouve déjà que ces cannibales n’ont pas pour les aliments salés la même répugnance qu’on leur avait d’abord supposée. »

Thus, it would be wrong to say that Americans did not select at all what they gathered, or that they did not pay attention to the aesthetics of Fijian artefacts. Rather, these aspects were integrated into a more systematic process of collecting. They too were amazed by Fijian skills and arts (e.g. Wilkes 1845, IV:87; Pickering 1854). In fact, the Wilkes' collection contains remarkable and rare examples of 1840 Fijian crafts. Because of the length of their visit, they also became better acquainted with the population than the French. This allowed them to attend specific events, such as the club dance described below, and to trade artefacts that the French could probably not have seen (Schindlbeck 1993:61), such as the *matavulo* masks mentioned in chapter 1.

### *Precious and inalienable valuables*

This greater intimacy that the Americans reached is relevant to examine further changes in Fijian value systems. The Wilkes collections, in particular, proves that a few items hitherto beyond transaction were becoming accessible to *kai valagi* in 1840. The question is: why?

### *Wilkes wooden figures*

For example, Wilkes' collection comprises artefacts related to pre-Christian religion, i.e. "precious" and "sacred" articles (Godelier 2004:19). Among them are five anthropomorphic wooden figures. These were probably ancestor images, used for religious purposes and kept in sacred places (Clunie 2003a:92–96 & 110–112). In 1840, Wilkes noted about such items:

"In this mbure [*burekalou* previously described as temples], images are found; but these are not worshipped as idols. They are only produced on great occasions, such as festivals, &c." (1845, III:91).

This observation, probably suggested to Wilkes by early missionaries (Wilkes 1845, III:161), is problematic. It was discussed in some detail by Henderson (1931a:xxxix–xl, 67–68 note 19).



4.9— NMNH, E3000

The female image (NMNH, E3000) is a hanger. Such items were used to protect food, including meat, from animals. Unfortunately, nothing is known about this item's exchange context. Peale simply described it as "protection safe" for food, usually "suspended from the upper part of the dwelling of Fijian islanders" (Peale 1846: n°1573). Yet, its anthropomorphic shape suggests it was not a common object. Quite geometric in shape, it consists in two parts. The figure itself seems to stand on a platform, surrounded with small vertical lugs, that must have served as hooks. On the top of it, a large disc in the same wood could be plugged. The ensemble is about 68.5cm high, and 40cm in diameter. Regarding close associations between female figures and spiritual purposes in Fiji and elsewhere in the Pacific, this piece must have had an extra-significance than being a mere rat-safe. Another female wooden hook will be discussed in the next chapter (FM 86.65). A few of them were illustrated and stylistically compared by Larsson (1960), including the two specimens mentioned in this thesis.



4.10— NMNH, E3275

E3275 is a wooden piece of architecture, perhaps a door frame, representing a male figure in high relief. It measures more than 105cm in height and is made of a fibrous wood, of light colour, that seems to have been damaged by weather conditions or other incidents. Its style is more naturalistic than that of E3000. The Peale catalogue reads: “*Idol* obtained from the ‘Chief Spirit place’ of the Fiji’s at Rawa, Island of ‘Viti Levu’” (1846: n°1819). Larsson also discussed this artefact (1960:40-42). From all evidence, it was a *tabu* or formerly *tabu* object. The *burekalou* to which it belonged was perhaps similar to that represented by Williams, Na Tavasara, Taveuni, with an anthropomorphic door frame (Williams 1982:222).





4.11— *Burekalou* Na Tavasara, Tavenui (Williams 1982:222)

It seems that Wilkes mentioned that *burekalou* himself, interestingly suggesting that it was not used any more in 1840. He also recorded the acquisition of a wooden figure at that place, but whose description does not match E3275 or the Peale catalogue:

“The old mbure near the missionaries' house is nearly gone to decay. Here was found the only carved image I saw in the group. It was a small figure cut out of solid wood, and the missionaries did not seem to think that it was regarded by the people with any reverence.” (Wilkes 1845, III:161)

Larsson considered that the two *burekalou*, represented in Williams's volume and described by Wilkes in 1840, were the same. Indeed, on the 27th October 1842, at Somosomo, Rev. Lyth wrote: “The bure of their principal god here has been rebuilt...” (Henderson 1931a:122)

It is possible, that like the figure acquired at Somosomo, E3275 had belonged to a decaying edifice. The material condition of the object indicates that it must have been quite old, and it also bears marks of extensive damage caused by fire. Whether this was intentional (war) or accidental, the figure might have lost its *mana* when it became burnt. In other words, it is possible that the figure was no longer *tabu* when it was exchanged. This item might also have been considered powerless or dangerous at one



point, and Fijians may have decided to destroy it, or to sacrifice it via an exchange with foreign partners (see chapter 1 and Küchler 1997, Hooper 2008). In 1840, a missionary station was established at Rewa, but the Wesleyans encountered very little success (see chapter 5). So, the American acquisition of such a piece could not be attributed to an abandonment of traditional religion yet.

As for *Buinikauvadra* (FM 86.65, chapter 5) the iconography was perhaps reminiscent of an exceptional being, historical or legendary. The carved headdress suggests a turban (*isala*) or a wig (*ulumate*), both attributes of individuals of chiefly rank. Similar features can be observed on other wooden figures from Fiji, including one specimen illustrated by Larsson, quite similar in its volume to E3275 although female (1960:50, fig.19). In fact, the following case will suggest some figures could have been associated as pairs, one female and the other male. The head of E3275 is also bigger than one could have expected from the body. In Pacific art history, this is usually said to be indicative of a great *mana*, mainly located in the head. Lastly, this piece is of interest for being an anthropomorphic piece of architecture. In this, it may suggest some historical, cultural and formal links with eastern Melanesia, especially with New Caledonia and Vanuatu where architectural ancestors' images, including door frames, were common.<sup>21</sup>



4.12— NMNH, E2999 (left) & E2996 (right)

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<sup>21</sup> Links between New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji are of particular interest for they have been quite overlooked to date. Evidences of those relations exist in the Fijian material culture, especially on the western part of the archipelago, as well as in other cultural manifestations.

E2996 & E2999 were probably ancestor figures (*matakau*) too. They are said to come from Vanualevu (Larsson 1960:44). Interestingly, they form a pair, as though they aimed to illustrate the duality often underlined in Fijian studies (Rochette 2010; Hocart 1914, 1915, 1927). Notwithstanding the different woods from which they are made, they have similar features and complementary attributes and posture. One is female (E2999) and the second male (E2996). Stylistically and technically the same hand can be identified. The two figures are about the same size (43cm and 47cm) and proportions. Both present a stylistic difference between the lower and upper body, the legs being quite angular while the chest, arms and head are smoother. The hand positions are similar but reversed: right hand against the chest, left hand below the navel for E2999, and the opposite for E2996. The legs of E2996 were cut just above the feet, while E2999 stands on a broken curved platform. The feet are not represented. Instead, the base is decorated with serrated geometrical designs in light relief. Under E2999's left leg, there is a cylindrical protrusion, which may indicate that the figure was inserted into a broader support. It is possible that E2996 originally stood on a similar base, perhaps attached to the same support. An old photograph indicated that E2996 one had a vegetal cord lashed around its neck and chest in the past. The two figures have very similar facial features as well, which resemble other anthropomorphic items, like well-known human-shape dishes (Clunie 2003a:97). In both cases, the left ear is simple while the right bears an unidentified ear ornament. That of E2996 has been broken. This attribute may be associated with already described customs (Clunie 1979). Unfortunately, no information has been found about the precise context of acquisition. Their description in Peale (1846) just reads: "1817-1818: Male and female Images from the Fiji Isl<sup>ds</sup>."



4.13— NMNH, E2998

The last figure (E2998) provides more information, as the context in which it was acquired is known from Wilkes' narrative. It was bought on Vanualevu, somewhere between Vaturua and Matainole (Bua Bay), in June 1840. Titian Peale exchanged it "for a paper of vermilion:"

"On the way from Vaturua to Matainole, a piece of consecrated ground was passed, on which were mounds of stone, with a rude idol, dressed with a turban and the Feejee hair-pins. The idol was surrounded by clubs set up edgewise, and many spears, arrows, trinkets, cocoa-nuts, &c, lay around, which had evidently been placed there as offerings. A large party of natives, who were with our gentlemen, on seeing them approach it, deserted, excepting a man and boy, who, contrary to the others, seemed anxious for them to partake of the offerings which lay about, and offered to sell the idol, which was bought for a paper of vermilion. Neither of them, however, could be tempted to touch a single article himself, although they had no objection to our gentlemen doing so. On the next day, Mr. Peale returning from his jaunt took his purchase and carried it on board."  
(Wilkes 1845, III:227-228)

The attraction for the red paint might explain why this obviously powerful and active object was sold/"sacrificed." It could even illustrate both the value of the figure and that of the paint in a place long acquainted with *kai valagi*. From the Fijians' behaviour, the place and objects must have been *tabu*. The fact that they did not care about the Americans "breaking" that *tabu* may suggest a few things. Possibly, they thought that the Americans could handle the broken *tabu*'s consequences, or that they were not concerned by them. On the other hand, perhaps they did not care about the consequences the Americans would have to suffer, as they had found a way to get rid of a dangerous and frightful thing — and to obtain red paint in exchange. One could even consider that it was a curse they gave to the Americans. Yet, such *tabu* in Fiji today only apply to certain groups, which allows others to eat *tabu* things, touch the head of the chief, etc. without any problem. Now, possibly, the Fijian concerns were not focused on the Americans at all, but rather on the statue. It could be suggested that, though the progress of the missionaries was anything but spectacular, Fijians started to think differently about their religious practices. Perhaps they sacrificed it in a form of iconoclasm (Hooper 2008). Fijians knew about museums and American endeavours in keeping things, even though Reynolds affirmed they did not understand them (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:165).

## Wilkes collection: evidences of lost historical traditions

Other religious or ceremonial objects were acquired by French and American crews. Some are of importance because they are unique examples of their kind, material witnesses of lost traditions.

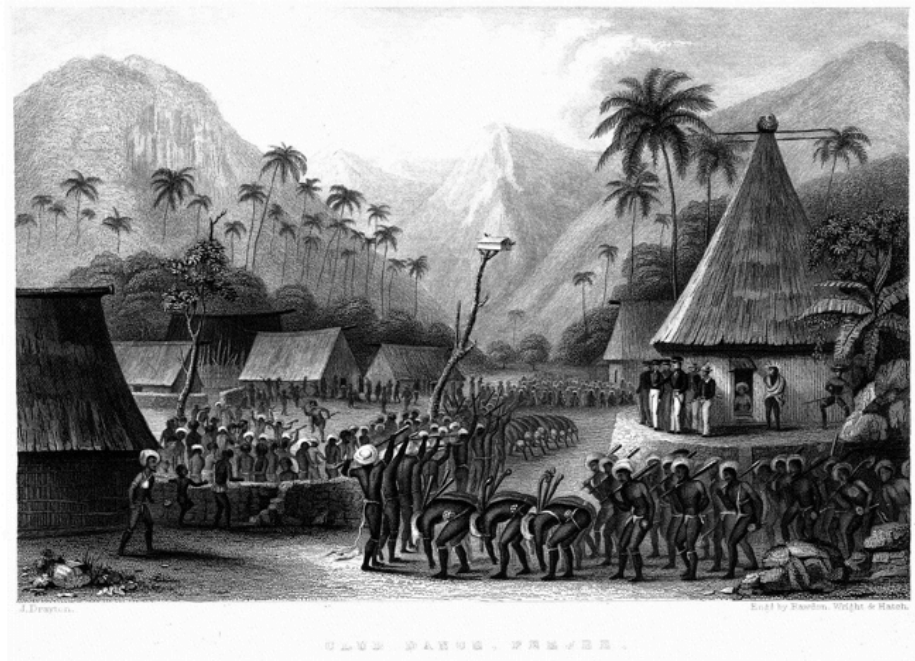
### *Spirit masks (matavulo)*

The two spirit masks acquired by Wilkes and his men at Levuka, Ovalau, in May 1840, following a club dance (*mekewau*) given in their honour, have already been illustrated and discussed in chapter 1 (fig.1.3 & 1.4). Interestingly, Wilkes reported that the dance ended by the massive gift of all the clubs used by the dancers, demonstratively piled up in front of Wilkes and his men as in local ceremonial presentations (*solevu*):

“The whole exhibition lasted fully an hour, and when the dance was over, each brought his club and laid it in front of us as a present. These weapons formed a very large pile; and it was amusing to me to perceive many of them change their clubs for those of much less value before they brought them to present. In return for these, they expected presents, which were given them.” (Wilkes 1845, III:199-200)

This *solevu* sheds light on the diplomatic nature of the ceremony and, by extension, of transactions between Americans and Fijians from Levuka. Previously, Wilkes thought he had proved his superiority by inviting/summoning Tanoa, the Vunivalu of Bau, to whom Levuka was vassal, to come and meet him during his first stay on Ovalau (Wilkes 1845, III:50-51). Yet, Wilkes noticed that Fijians controlled what they gave away, and this gives us an indication of the value of some clubs, whether accessible to the Americans or not. Similarly, this might also explain the great number and diversity Fijian clubs in Wilkes’ collection (see below).

Returning to the masks (*matavulo*), though the dance and a masked dancer were carefully described and pictured in Wilkes’ *Narrative* (Wilkes 1845, III:197-200), their acquisition was not recorded. Were they part of the ceremonial gift or bought separately? Also, the narrative only described one dancer wearing a *matavulo* during the dance the Americans attended. From Drayton’s image, the artefact they saw in use was E2910 rather than E2914. It is possible that, following their systematic collecting strategy, the Americans acquired it and on the same occasion another one after the dance. In Drayton’s engraving, a number of club types were represented.



4.14— “Club dance” by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:198)

#### *Fiji oracles or miniature burekalou*

Other objects were observed by the Americans in 1840, relating to historical practices. Among them, Peale described two “*Oracles of the Fiji’s*... kept in the Temples, and consulted by priests. The material is a Cocoa nut Covered with seeds” (1846: n°1820 & 1821, original emphasis). One of them was identified by Walsh in Copenhagen (Danish National Museum, n°I.1251, previously E3007).<sup>22</sup> Walsh described it as a rattle, made of a coconut husk and covered with a vegetal gum formerly embedded with seeds (Walsh, personal archives, consulted 30th July 2009). Unfortunately, during this research, only a bad black and white picture was seen (below), along with a quite informative drawing. The picture shows a twisted cord attached to the main artefact. According to Dr Walsh, this string was made of coconut fibre (*magimagi*). The object was about 16.5cm long and 11cm wide, and only ten seeds remained on it in the 1980s. The old NMNH catalogue card reads: “Cocoa shell with seeds of *Abrus Prentaria*.” That description does not exactly match Wilkes’ narrative. Altogether, however, Peale’s catalogue and Wilkes’ description evoke two types of artefacts already associated with *tabu* and old religion in chapter 3: coconut *tabu* markers and miniature *burekalou* temples.

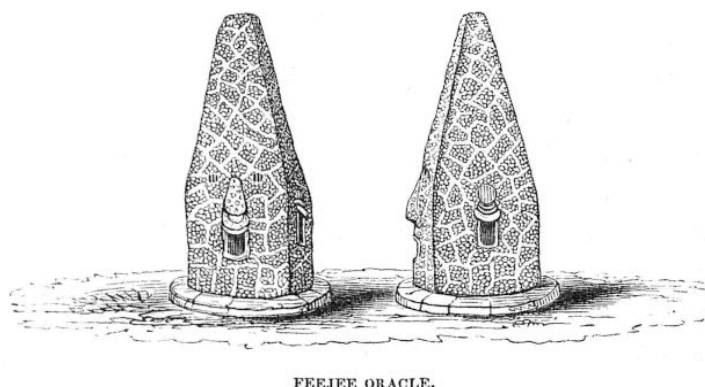
<sup>22</sup> The Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, received some pieces from the Wilkes collection as part of the endeavour of “distributing knowledge” undertaken by the Smithsonian Institution in the 1860s.



4.15— DNM, I.1251

Wilkes's narrative precisely referred to an "oracle" from Levuka's *burekalou*, which was in fact a small temple itself:

"The priest at Levuka pretends to receive oracles from a miniature mbure, which he keeps behind a screen in the spirit-house. This engine of superstition is of the form represented in the figure below. It is about four feet high; the base is about fifteen inches square; it is hollow within, has an ear on one side of it, and a mouth and nose on the other. This oracle is covered with scarlet and white seeds, about the size of a large pea, which are stuck upon it in fantastic figures with gum. To the priest this is a labour-saving machine... he merely whispers in the ear of the model, and pretends to receive an answer by applying his own ear to its mouth." (Wilkes 1845, III:94-95)



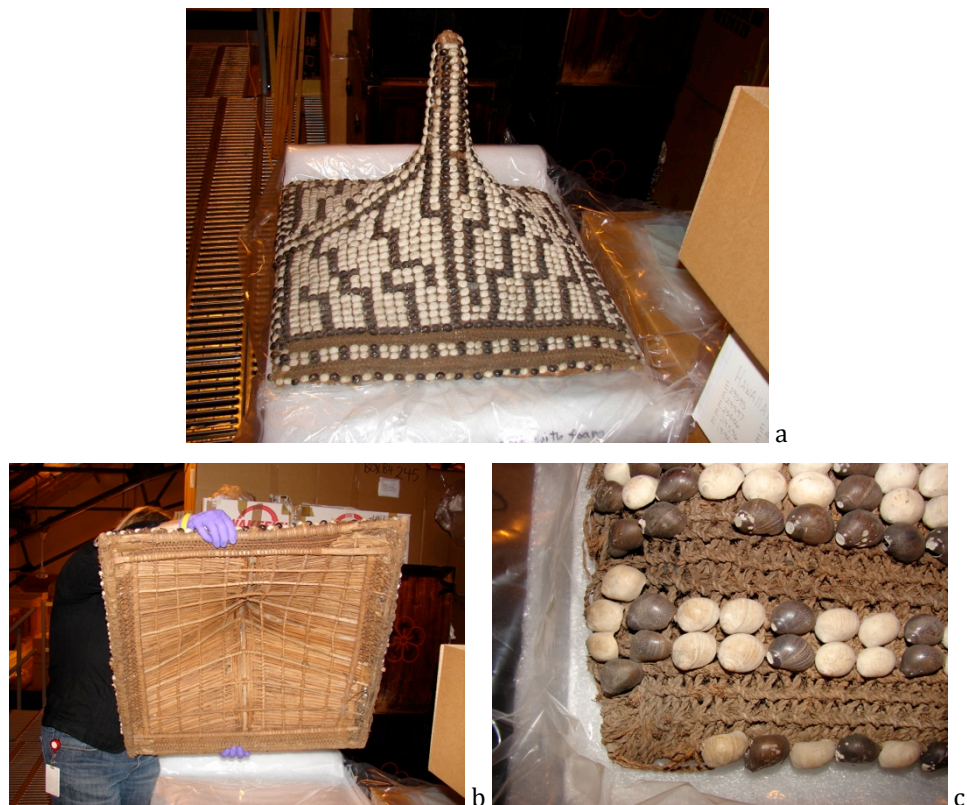
4.16— "Feejee Oracle" by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:94)

Miniature *burekalou*, usually made of artistically intricate *magimagi* cords, have been acknowledged early (Williams 1982:223). Yet, few reached museum collections before the 1850s, with striking exceptions in Salem. Again, it seems that Wilkes had access to exceptional objects. The only item that remains does not give the impression, however, that the piece he acquired was the miniature *burekalou* depicted by Drayton.

In any event, Wilkes' collection raises, again, questions about the circumstances of acquisition of "sacred" religious artefacts, while illustrating rare traditions that seem now lost. Regarding the acquisition matter, a comparison between the above examples



and miniature *burekalou* kept at the PEM (Salem) suggests two things: first, some religious artefacts were accessible to Westerners who spent a long time in the islands from the mid-1830s; secondly, Americans must have been eager to obtain such items. Some miniature *burekalou* mentioned in this thesis are exceptional specimens, showing a double-roof (Salem) or a seeded surface (above). Such material features would have distinguished them. *Magimagi*, coconut husk or fibres, red and white seeds were no doubt relevant to mark *tabu* and add some extra-*mana* to the artefacts. In parallel, one may believe that Europeans would have admired their religious dimension, along with their impressive technical features and finished aspect. Therefore, miniature *bure* can be seen as cross-culturally valuable and highly desirable. It is most likely Americans could have paid a lot for such items, which they may have perceived as works of art or masterpieces, in echo of their own tastes and with reference to their original use and value.



4.17— PEM, E4713 (and details)

At the PEM, one artefact consists in a kind of roof (E4713). This item is entirely covered with black and white shells, from some kind of sea-snails. According to the catalogue card, it was acquired in 1840 too, by Captain Hathaway of New Bedford —

probably a whaling captain. This item has a very unusual shape and any related artefact on which it may have laid is now missing. Its structure is evocative of a *burekalou's* roof, but its square base evolves in a narrow pointed protuberance, almost like a pagoda's roof, while usual *bure* roofs are rectangular at the base and trapezoidal in elevation.



4.18 — “Mbure house” by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:91)

Technically speaking, the reed and *magimagi* structure of E4713 matches a Fijian provenance. The black and white shells that cover it form contrasted geometrical designs. Compared to specimens with seeded surfaces (above and below), it can likely be identified as a miniature *burekalou's* roof. However, in contrast to most common articles, it seems it could be opened from the top, like a box or chest. The presence of shells, including white shells, is consistent with a *tabu* artefact. On the top, something seems to be missing, possibly the traditional crossbeam which topped most Fijian temples, sometimes adorned with *bulivula* shells.





4.19— BM, Oc1960,11.37

Two other museum artefacts illustrate a tradition of ornamented *burekalou*. Both were acquired by the botanist Berthold Seemann during his scientific expedition to Fiji (1860-61). They consist in miniature temples, whose surface, like in Wilkes example, is entirely covered with a carbohydrate paste (probably of *uto*, breadfruit) onto which *diridamu* (*Abrus precatorius*, red or red and black) and *sila* seeds (Job's tears of various shades of grey) have been embedded. One is quite small (KG n°59911) and the second bigger (BM Oc1960,11.37 — 43cm high). They both have a light wooden structure.

Seemann described them as follows:

“The greyish bony involucre of the Sila, or Job's tears (*Coix Lacryma Jobi*, Linn.), a grass growing in swamp and having the aspect of Indian-corn, as well as the seeds of the Diridamu, Quiridamu, or Leredarau (*Abrus precatorius*, Linn.), which resemble those of the Drala (*Erythrina Indica*, Linn.) in having a bright red colour and a black spot, are affixed with breadfruit gum to the outside of certain oracle boxes, of which Wilkes has given fair illustrations in his 'Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition.' These boxes have a more or less pyramidal shape, and are kept in the temples, as the supposed abode of the spirit consulted through the priests.” (Seemann 1862:377, original emphasis)

He added:

“Toys, consisting of cocoa-nut shells, and covered with these materials, are occasionally seen in the hands of native children, and they have rather a pretty effect.” (*Ibid.*:377-378)

The second object here mentioned sheds light on Copenhagen's artefact — and *vice versa*. It is indeed possible that Seemann was mistaken here and that what he

perceived as mere toys were religious items — or former religious items — used, like other coconut artefacts, to support incantations, etc. Finally, it can be noticed that voyagers attested to the use of *Abrus precatorius* seeds in Tonga, on body ornaments, from at least the late eighteenth century (Labillardière 1800, II:139).

### In and out transactions

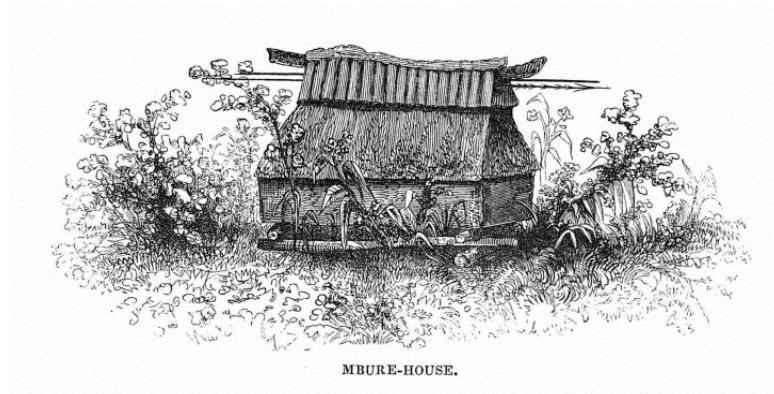
The previous examples confirmed that the Americans did not acquire everything they wanted. Some things had entered into transactions that had not previously.

Nevertheless, other significant artefacts and materials were still not traded by Fijians. For example, other miniature temples were inaccessible to Wilkes in 1840. Some were seen in Rewa; but from there the U.S. Exploring Expedition only brought back a textual description and an engraving (below).

“The party visited the most conspicuous houses of the place. The first which they saw was the mbure, situated on the spot where the king's father was murdered; the mound on which it is built is an artificial one, ten feet high. The mbure is about twelve feet square, and its sides or walls only four feet high; while its high-pitched roof rises to the height of about thirty feet. The walls and roof of the mbure are constructed of canes about the size of a finger, and each one is wound round with sennit as thick as a cod-line, made from the cocoa-nut husk. At a little distance, the whole house looked as though it was built of braided cord, and presented a singular and curious appearance, creating a favourable idea of the skill as well as labour expended in its construction.

There are others of small dimensions, of which the annexed woodcut will give an idea. These are generally used as the depositories of the chiefs or persons of note.” (Wilkes 1845, III:125)

In contrast to architectural pieces mentioned before, these objects were obviously still *active* — i.e. *tabu*/ sacred and therefore inalienable (Godelier 1996, 2004) — when the Americans encountered them.



4.20— “Mbure-House” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:125)

Similarly, very few items acquired during d'Urville or Wilkes' voyages include whale ivory, mostly a few clubs (MQB 72.53.436; NMNH E2889, E2884 & E5070) and one headrest (NMNH E3277). Yet, amazing objects were made at that time that must have kindled d'Urville or Wilkes' desire to possess them. In fact, *civavonovono* caught the attention of the French and the Americans. Both mentioned them as objects worn by high-ranking chiefs, but none were exchanged. That of Tanoa has already been used as an example (fig.1.9). In 1840, it was depicted by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:58), but it remained beyond transaction until 1875-80.

In contrast, other materials formerly highly valued seemed now easy to access, including *civa* shells. Reynolds described "breast ornaments of mother-of-pearl, but to which they [Fijians] did not attach much value" (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:160–161). In fact, many simple *civa* breastplates are present in the Wilkes collection (e.g. SI E3039-E3043, E4542). In competition with ivory, and composite pectorals, they must have become devalued and alienable.

### *Insights into 1820s-1850s Fijian material culture*

Belcher, who was visiting Fiji at the same time as the US Exploring expedition noticed:

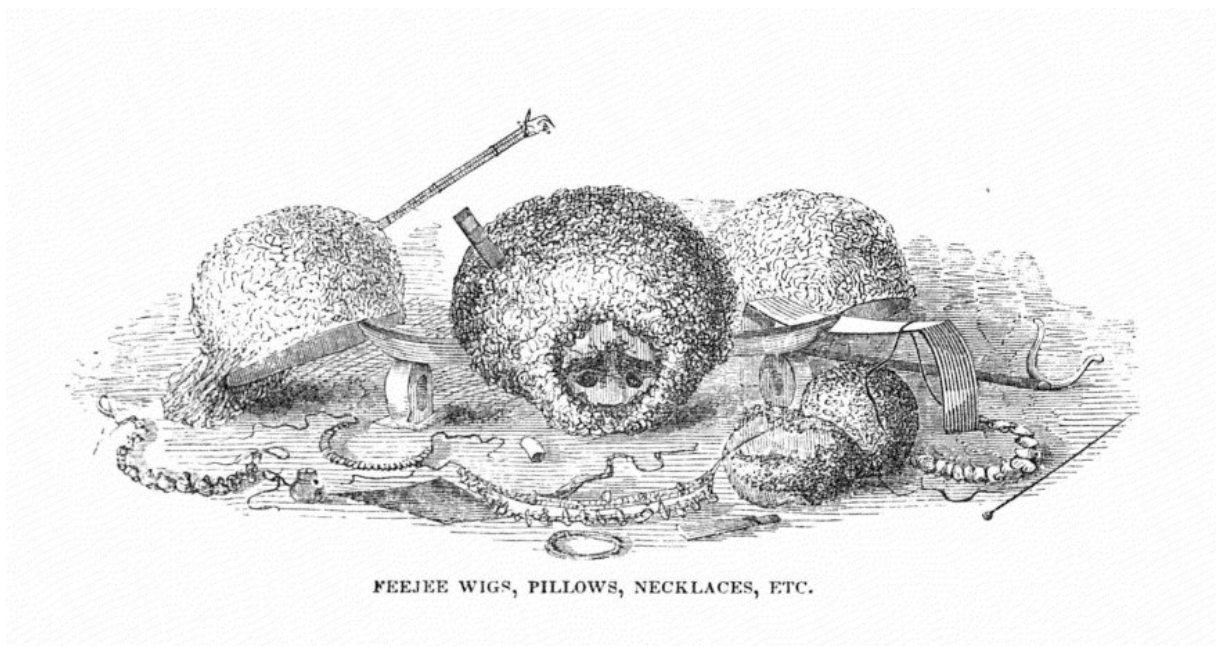
"They readily part with any of their arms and ornaments for whale's teeth, which are at all times irresistible articles of traffic." (Belcher 1843:50)

As in Salem, weaponry and body-adornment were indeed the two best-represented categories in 1830s/1840s collections examined during this research. They will now be examined in some detail, along with other items from the 1820s-1850s. What has been discussed so far has demonstrated that Wilkes' and d'Urville's collections provide an excellent insight into late 1830s and early 1840s Fijian crafts, including their most exceptional components. We may now want to look at them into a broader art-historical context, as references to analyse and compare productions characteristic of the 1820s-1850s found in museum collections. Some cases have already been discussed (e.g. breastplates, miniature *burekalou*). By briefly reviewing others this section aims to shed light on a few objects, technical features and stylistic designs that are milestones to understand the cultural and material evolution of Fijian early societies. This overview will also highlight more material and symbolic values, essential to appreciate what was traded until 1854. Finally, it will underline the mechanisms of exchange, absorption and empowerment at stake, by drawing attention to what was tradable and what was not.

## Body ornaments

### Head-ornaments

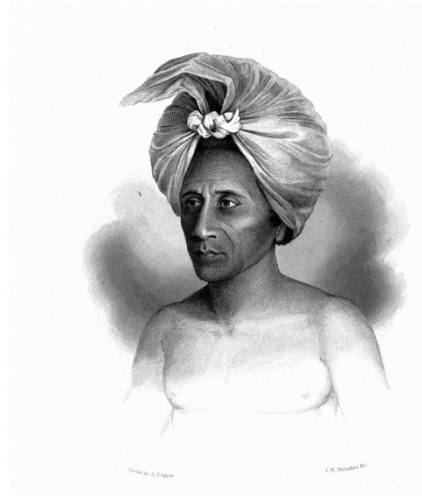
In Fiji, the head (*ulu*) was the most *tabu* of all body parts; and this was particularly the case for high-ranking personages. Their headgear was therefore significant. By wearing something on their head, chiefly characters rendered visible their status. Thus they also protected their *tabu*-head, physically as well as spiritually. Head-ornaments consisted in powerful materials and forms, which impacted people's imaginaries and induced an extra respect toward the visibly *tabu* individual. A few, however, were alienable from the 1830s.



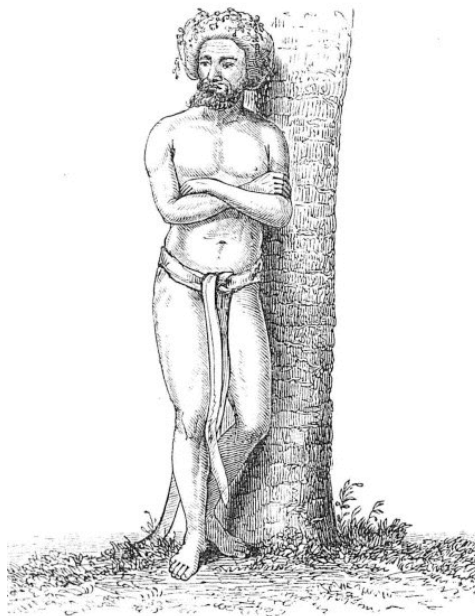
4.21— "Feejee Wigs, &c." by J.H. Manning (Wilkes 1845, III:384)

### *Isala*

In 1830s/1840s collections, chiefly head-ornaments were mostly *isala*, pieces of very fine *masi*-cloth, white, sometimes fringed, and worn like turbans. Euro-American surveyors noticed these and often depicted men of rank wearing them — e.g. Veidovi of Rewa (Wilkes 1845, III:147), Tanoa of Bau (*Ibid.*:59) and Tui Levuka (*Ibid.*:50).



4.22— “Vendovi” by A.T. AGate (Wilkes 1845, III:147)



FEEJEE CHIEF, TUI LEVUKA.

4.23— “Feejee Chief, Tui Levuka” by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:50)

Here, Tui Levuka wears a *malo* (loin cloth) too. Its extremities (*maloyara*) were indicative of his rank. The longer they were, the higher in rank the wearer. Both types of cloths are found in museum collections from the 1830s. As discussed elsewhere (conference paper, MQB, April 2011), they were culturally relevant as rank markers, fine in their making, and easy to transport. They thus had a number of assets to seduce Western visitors. Yet, they are quite difficult to identify in museums. They were often confused with mere samples of barkcloth or mixed with pieces from other provenances, not being painted (*kesa*). Also, they are quite fragile and once unfolded they did not



always last long. On the other hand, where they were kept folded up, they are distinctive due to a specific mode of storage, reminiscent of a very narrow and tight folded map. A few examples survived at the PEM (e.g. E5289, E5290) and in the Wilkes collection (NMNH E3293-95). Specimens must exist in d’Urville’s collection too, but their condition renders their identification more difficult. In any event, *isala* are another kind of significant objects visible, alienable and transportable that Westerners acquired, although it seems they were not always valued by museums.



4.24— “Tanoa, Abouni-Valou, Roi de Pao — Naturels de Pao. Iles Viti” (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, Atlas: pl.85)

### *Feathered Headdresses*

In the Wilkes collection, there is one particularly remarkable headdress, already discussed in chapter 1 (fig.1.5). Despite its precious materials and prestigious owner (Tui Cakau), Wilkes simply reported in his narrative: “among the curiosities I accepted was a huge head-dress, in shape somewhat like a cocked-hat” (1845, III:169). What remains of it today — after it had been found into pieces and entirely reconstructed and conserved — does not allow us to assess the exactness of the above engraving (fig.1.6). It, however, permits an analysis of its overall shape and materials. The item is made of a number of little sticks, including *sasa* (coconut palm mid-ribs), assembled together into

little bundles, individually wrapped in white *masi* and fitted together with narrow strips of *masi*-cloth. An additional strip of indented black *masi* is reminiscent of the original décor. The triangular protuberance of the top resembles *iseru sasa* with pointed ends. At the end of each “bundle” of sticks, there were feathers. A few partially remain today. These are black or red (*kula*). Combined with white *masi*, they were no doubt highly valued, powerful markers of rank.

Although rare, that head-ornament shares features with other headdresses from the area. For instance, in the 1770s Cook noticed the headdress (*palatavake*) of Tui Tonga — Paulaho. Webber represented him and the artefact, now probably in Vienna (Kaepler 2009:192-193, fig.264-265). More recently, feathered headdresses were used in Samoa (*tuinga*) or in Rotuma (e.g. BM, OC.6612 from Brenchley’s collection).



4.25— BM, Oc,6612

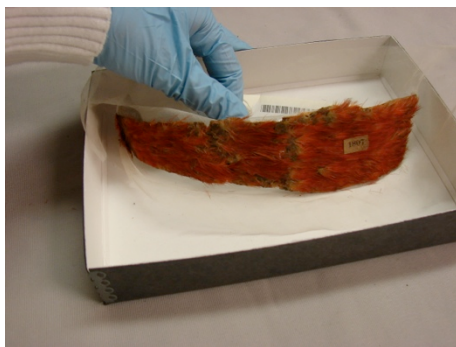
All these combine a light vegetal structure with feathers. The frame often comprises small sticks, lashed together and wrapped with precious materials such as red wool or barkcloth. The Samoan *tuinga* often include elements with powerful light-reflecting properties such as mother-of-pearl or mirrors. Red, black and white are the dominating colours. All of them, including the Wilkes headdress, seem made to flare up from the head of distinguished individuals, visually increasing their aura.



4.26— NMNH, E23985

There is another, lesser-known, feathered headdress at the NMNH (E23985). Isaac M. Brower donated it to the SI after he had sojourned in Fiji in the 1860s as a U.S. Consul. Like the Wilkes specimen, it comprises tubular bundles of small sticks, wrapped in *masi*-cloth and topped with feathers. This item could not be examined in detail during this research and deserves further investigation.

While researching museum collections, one may also notice a number of head-ornaments with *kula* feathers as status symbols. There are for instance a few *imilamila* hair pins topped with *kula* (e.g. SI E2913). More striking is the number of feathered frontlets in 1830s/1840s collections. There are some in the Wilkes collection (SI E3030-3035), and others among earlier (PEM E5287) and later ensembles (SI E23929; BM Oc1895C3.693-Oc1895C3.694). A fine specimen is now kept in Cambridge, where it is currently exhibited (Herle & Carreau 2013:47, fig.3.45). It seems that similar items were also available in Tonga from the 1770s (see Kaeppler 1978a:213, fig.430 n°2).



4.27— NMNH, E3031



4.28— NMNH, E3034



These are made of pandanus leaves, cut in a lozenge shape, onto which *kula* feathers have been glued with a vegetable resin. They must have been *tabu* markers too. In 1846, Peale explained they were worn above *isala* turbans (Peale 1846: n°1803). Williams also described them, along with other valuables (*iyau*), in the context of *solevu* at Lakeba on the 22nd May 1843:

“The ornaments of the dancers as well as of the musicians were chiefly native, and, excepting two orange cowries and the frontlets composed of the scarlet feathers of a kind of cockatoo found about Rewa, they were worthless. The property from Bou comprised two handsome spears, more than 30 clubs wrapped with fine cynnet, 20 whales' teeth, an immense root of *yangona* and several hundred fathoms of *lichi* or *masi* from Kandavu. The dance, as usual, had quite a warlike character.” (Henderson 1931a:164)

### Neck ornaments

Neck ornaments (*itaube*), pendants and necklaces, are probably the most frequent ornament found in 1830s/1840s collections. These show a great diversity, and often include valued materials.

### Shells

In addition to pearl-shells, a number of shells were used as neck ornaments, most of which can also be considered rank markers. The importance of cowry shells (*bulivula*/*bulidina* and *bulikula*) has already been noted. Both types are frequent in museum collections, in various arrangements and size. Some *bulikula* were for instance made into precious pendants, hanging from valued fibre cords (SI E2993-2994).



4.29— NMNH, E2994

Smaller cowries, *bulileka* (*Ovula costella*) were also associated with chiefly rank. According to Clunie, dense necklaces made of these shells, cut lengthwise and harmoniously arranged around a precious vegetal cord of *roga* fibres, were called *vorovoro*; and they were among the most valued Fijian artefacts (2003b:fig.105). Clunie counted two of them at the Fiji Museum. Another one is kept in Washington, among the Wilkes collection (SI E3168). Its original provenance remains uncertain. Similar specimens exist elsewhere, notably in Melanesia. The very item Clunie used as an example (FM 58.48) is, itself, said to come from the “New Hebrides” in the FM’s register book (Volume 1979-82). Yet, as for Dumont d’Urville’s *civa* necklaces, the question of provenance appears as a subsidiary one. Evidence shows that *vorovoro* were valued in Fiji. Other necklaces that include small white cowries were also regarded as valuable. It was certainly the case of one necklace from the d’Urville collection, made of intact *Umbilical ovula* and lashed together around a cord of *masi* (MQB 72.56.243).



4.30— NMNH, E3168



4.31— MQB, 72.56.243

Various other shells were used in *itaube* (necklaces). A few were worn like *bulikula* as single pendants, suspended from ornamented cords. Thus, Wilkes’ collection includes a *Harpa* shell, attached to a braided cord of vegetable fibres, onto which glass beads have been inserted (SI E3045). One Fijian woman depicted during d’Urville’s second visit to Fiji seems to wear a similar *itaube* (below), along with a large ear-plug.



4.32— “Naturels des îles Viti” (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, Atlas: pl.86)



4.33— NMNH, E3045

In parallel, small sea snails were also represented (PEM E5155-56, 5166, 5202 and 5204-05). Other specimens are found in d’Urville’s collection (e.g. MQB 72.56.244-245, MHNT AC.FI.76), where small white shells are inserted around a large vegetable cord. It was also frequent to see shells simply threaded onto one strip of pandanus (e.g. PEM E5161, FM 58.23).



4.34— MQB, 72.56.245

Olive snails' shells (*Olividae*) were usually assembled into complex necklaces or rattles. Their shape was indeed reminiscent of wrist and ankle dancing implements (e.g. SI 23951). The shells clinked when they were worn, producing a sound that certainly participated in their aesthetic. Handling them in museum stores is quite a noisy operation (PEM E5206; SI E3173, E23933).



4.35— NMNH, E3173

In contrast, there is one kind of shell noticeably missing from most 1830s/1840s collections while found in later ensembles, red/orange *sovui* shells (*Spondylus*). They were obviously valued when Wilkes and d'Urville visited the archipelago. Chiefly personages were depicted wearing them in travelling accounts, notably Veidovi (Wilkes 1845, III:127, here fig.4.82) and Adi Dreketi — Liku Qoliwasawasa — whose *tabu* head is also adorned with feathers (below). *Sovui* are far more frequent in later collections, especially in early colonial ones, often associated with well decorated strings of precious materials, e.g. horse hair and beads (Clunie 2003a:fig.103&104).



4.36— “The Queen of Rewa” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:135)

### Boar tusks

Similarly, circular boar tusks (*batinivuaka*) are almost non-existent in 1830s/1840s collections, while they are quite numerous in colonial ones. Like *sovui* shells, they were suspended on valuable suspension cords which include glass beads (FM 74.56) or braided pandanus (SI E23934). Those which existed before are shorter, and not circular (SI E3048). Early specimens were often assembled together with another tusk, in the shape of a crescent. The Wilkes collection contains one specimen (SI E3049). Earlier ones also existed (Dumont d’Urville 1830-35, Atlas: pl.XC), and later examples are found in colonial times as well, sometimes with metal mounts (e.g. FM 82.303 & 82.1180T).



4.37— NMNH, E3049

It seems that, at first, although they valued pigs and tusks, Fijians did not master the art of growing circular tusks, unlike their neighbours from Vanuatu. However, once planters settled in Fiji, from the 1850s, a quite large number of foreign workers were

employed in the plantations, including Ni-Vanuatu people (Halapua 2001). It is therefore possible that Fijians learnt from these immigrants how to grow tusks.

Also interesting regarding our concern for material evolutions, a few later specimens imitate the shape of a boar tusk in other materials, for example in mother-of-pearl (FM 82.300).



4.38— FM, 82.300

### Other teeth and bones

This leads us to consider further equivalences among precious materials and things (*iyau*). Attention has already been drawn to a number of them, including correspondences between human beings (*tamata*), turtles (*vonu*) and pigs (*vuaka*) (chapter 2). In chapter 3, formal and usual connections between materials like shells, whalebone and ivory were investigated, as well as between various types of beads, breastplates, and so on. We will now examine a particular type of Fijian material, special by the fascination they exerted on early European and American visitors, bones and teeth.

Due to the Fijian reputation of fierceness, cannibalism and savagery — shaped from the first encounters between Fiji and Europeans — objects made of bones and teeth must have had a special effect on Western imaginaries. In the 1830s and 1840s some were traded. It seems they also belonged to the category of Fijian *iyau*, most of them being related to special events, individuals or beliefs.





4.39— NMNH, E3179

For example, the NMNH has an interesting necklace made of pig's teeth, intercalated with shell disks and one green faceted glass bead (SI E3179). Others include human teeth alone (SI E3176), mixed with shell and glass beads (MHNT AC.FI.78; SI E4564) or with pig's teeth (SI E3178). Because of the special role of pigs in Fiji, especially where they were thought to be sacrificially equivalent to human beings and, to some extent, substitutes for their flesh (Waterhouse 1997:318, and Sahlins 1983), it may not be a surprise to find a mix of human and pigs teeth. Such *itaube* must have been worn by personages of chiefly rank and/or powerful warriors, being reminiscent of victories and associated feasts.

Bones and teeth of dogs, fishes, snakes and other animals are also found. They too must have been associated with precise beliefs, some of which we would call religious and others totemic. Clunie, for instance, exemplified this problematic with necklaces made of snake's vertebrae, *suinigata*. They were made from the bones of "sacred snakes," raised and kept in special pits, waiting to be consumed by priests and chiefs in Eastern Vitilevu (2003a: fig.101-102). The snake (*gata*) was also a totemic animal in several places; and it was associated with the founding-god, Degei (Gatty 2009:61). Similarly, sharks were also totems, chiefly food, and the living image of Dakuwaqa, the shark-god (*Ibid.*:56). Dogs were highly valued in Polynesia, and totems in Tubou, Lakeba (Simonne Pauwels, personal communication, May 2010). Other fishes were totems too, and their bones were also threaded into necklaces (e.g. SI E3175, E23928).

Of particular interest are flying-fox fruit bats (*beka*). Although they were not mentioned as totemic animals by Capell and Lester (1941), they probably were important too. In some places, their hunting was surrounded with *tabu* and, like shark and turtle fishing, it required specific skills (Clunie *et al.* 1983). In Rewa their flight was also imitated in dances (*meke*) (Derrick 1957:17). In Tonga they were associated with



the royal family (personal information A. Kaeppler, 2009), and in New Guinea they were linked with witchcraft (personal information P. Peltier, 2006). In New Caledonia their fur was used in some of the most valuable objects of Kanak societies. From Fiji, two necklaces made of flying-foxes' jaws were found during this research (MQB 72.56.723; PRM 1884.99.15). D'Urville acquired one example in 1838 (below), made of a twenty-five jaws, carefully attached to a cord of dyed *vau* (Hibiscus).



4.40— MQB, 72.56.723

The Pitt-Rivers Museum specimen is described on an old label as a kind of “currency.” This item consists in a number of half-jaws of flying-foxes, threaded onto a twisted string of *vau* (Hibiscus).



4.41— PRM, 1884.99.15

## Ivory

It has already been noted in chapter 3 that ivory was mostly absent from early collections until the 1830s-1840s. However, a few objects attributed to Wilkes and d'Urville's expeditions include ivory.



4.42— NMNH, E3660

In Washington for instance, there is a necklace that consists of large barrel-shaped beads of whale ivory. Although its original Peale number (740) relates it to the Marquesas Islands, it was subsequently attributed to Fiji. As a matter of fact, there are a number of such necklaces in later museum collections (e.g. MHNT AC.FI.86 or MQB 71.1954.20.176 D). Yet, the very fact that this item was alienable in 1840 may indicate that it did not originate from Fiji. Fijian collections from that period include very little ivory in contrast to Western Polynesian ensembles collected at the same time or earlier (see Kaeppler 1978a; 2009).

Ivory pectorals in the shape of *buli* shells are absent from 1830s/1840s collections, but they appear from the 1860s. Brower for instance, brought back two of them to Washington (e.g. SI E23923, E23952). They are rather small and interestingly came with a *tabua* (E23919), some ivory necklaces (E23918) and large blue beads (E23953) on European cloth. The most naturalistic ivory imitations examined during this research were found in colonial collections, notably in Cambridge (e.g. CUMAA Z\_2722\_A/1923.H149 or Z\_2722\_D/1923.H159).

## Men's clubs and women's skirts: gendered objects or gendered exchange partners

Wilkes and d'Urville's collections also contain a very large number of clubs and skirts (*liku*). These examples allow us to discuss the role of women in Fiji-West early interactions and the relevance of the notion of gendered objects from early Fiji.

It is likely that some distinctions between men and women already impacted Fijian early material culture. For instance, like today, craftsmanship was gendered — and this is well illustrated in Wilkes' account that describes *women* potters, *women* employed in plaiting, etc. Thus, there are women's crafts (e.g. pottery, basketry, *masi* making) and men's crafts (e.g. wood carving, house building), with possible exceptions. Consequently, some items were *made by women*, including *iyau* (*iyau ni yalewa*), and others were *made by men*, including *iyau* (*iyau ni tagane*). Hooper explicitly distinguished them in his thesis on Lauan valuables (1982:53-75). In addition, there were objects only used by women (e.g. some skirts) and others only used by men (e.g. clubs). Of course, some articles were also used by both sexes, such as neck-ornaments, bows and arrows, or *ulumate* wigs. Finally, we have seen that a few objects were reserved to higher status and special occasions. Some of them were personal "belongings" that seemed attached to somebody, quite intrinsically — and inalienably. Furthermore, age and key moments in life (e.g. pregnancy) were also marked via objects. *Liku* are good examples of this (Clunie 1982a, fig.D; 2003a:80, fig.90; Jacobs 2013:71).

In the previous chapter, a few instances were mentioned where women were actors in the exchanges. For example, Lockerby's friend was brought from place to place by his "lady friend" to buy sandalwood from her family (Im Thurn & Wharton 1925:72–73). Women also came to Captain Driver, hoping to exchange things with him directly (Cary 1998[1887]:64). Similarly, Wilkes and d'Urville's accounts described women involved in trading activities with Euro-Americans. For instance, after he had explained how men traded almost anything for whale's teeth, notably weapons, Lieutenant du Bouzet — second-in-command on the *Zélée* — wrote:

"Women, on the other hand, seeing our desire to possess these artistically-made belts, which were their only dress, came from all places to exchange them, against necklaces and other trifles..." (Dumont d'Urville 1841-54, IV:383, my translation)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> « Les femmes, d'un autre côté, voyant notre désir d'avoir de ces ceintures artistiquement faites, qui constituaient leur unique vêtement, en offraient de tous côtés en échange de colliers et d'autres bagatelles... »

This allows us to suggest a parallel between clubs and *liku* skirts. In terms of trade, it seems they acted quite similarly. Both were, at the same time, *iyaya* (personal “belongings” or equipment) and *iyau* (valuables). They were attached to a limited number of persons, including their maker(s), bearer(s) and owner(s), and were representative of those people’s rank or personal achievements. This is quite obvious for *liku* but it was also relevant for clubs, especially for distinguished clubs (*gado*) (see Tippet 1968:66, Clunie 2003b:53). Both *liku* and clubs were part of the individual’s public appearance. Both, finally, were largely alienable, replaceable and traded with *kai valagi* in the 1830s and 1840s — some, it seems, only by men and others by women.

## Skirts

### Liku vau

*Liku* skirts are numerous in 1830s/1840s collections, though fewer than clubs. Like weapons, it is also possible that they nourished Western imaginaries (see Boulay 2005). *Liku* skirts are, from far, the best represented *iyau ni yalewa* in museum collections, especially in the Wilkes collection.



4.43— “Likus” (Wilkes 1845, III:358)

Most *liku* are made of the inner bark of *vau* (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). They are quite short, a few centimetres wide. The fibres are dyed in several shades, and their arrangements vary, some of which are very complex. On *liku vau*, it seems that layers mostly mattered. These alternate in colours and length, so that one can easily reckon

their number by simply looking at the skirt. As usual in Fijian women's crafts the dominating colours are black, white and reddish brown, in addition to the natural colour of the *vau*'s bark and to the turmeric ochre, usually associated with pregnant women (Clunie 2003a:80).

In the Wilkes collection, as well as in contemporaneous ones — d'Urville (MQB), traders (PEM), Belcher (BM) —, the superposed layers are in general concentrated in the lower part of the skirt, but some exceptions exist. The waistband usually consists in woven *vau*. In later collections, *vau* skirts have a tendency to contain more layers, densely packed, sometimes exceeding the number of ten in only a few centimetres in width. In any event, a striking feature of most specimens — like on early clubs — is the *maestria* of their making, along with the controlled degree of invention they allowed. All *liku vau* seen during this research were immediately identifiable within a type, as well as distinctive unique artefacts: e.g. SI (Wilkes), E3308, E4515, E4517, E4524 and E4620; MQB 71.1909.19.74 Oc, 71.1930.54.195; PEM, E5372, E5374; BM (*Sulphur*) Oc.1842, 1210.47-48, Oc.1842, 0126.9; BM (*Herald*) Oc1857, 0318.22-24; SI (Brower) E23997; and KG (Seemann) 65747 and 65725.



4.44— NMNH, E4524



4.45— NMNH, E3308

The above examples show continuity in the use of *liku* skirts, at least until the 1860s. They also highlight a wide array of variations and skills. Also, some *liku* include other materials. White *masi*-cloth is one (SI ET15296, E3308; MQB 71.1930.54.195). Others possess very long *yara* parts, proportional to the rank of the wearer, just like *maloyara* (PEM E5372; SI E4605). Wilkes' collection, finally, comprises a few truly unusual specimens, including one whose front part is woven in *masi*-cloth and *vau*, like a mat (SI E3253).





4.46— NMNH, E3253

### Liku waloa, and others

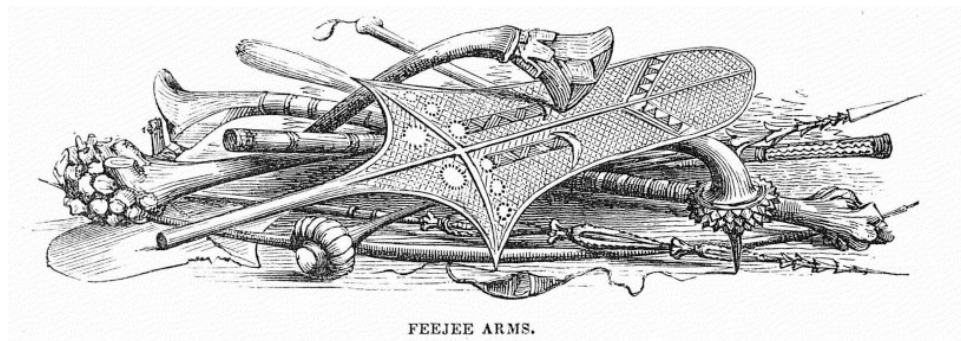
At the NMNH, there is also a rare *liku*, very long, that seems to be made of dyed pandanus leaves, attached to a waistband of woven pandanus (SI E3310). Unfortunately, the information attached to it is quite unclear. Was this a woman's skirt? To date, only one other specimen has been found in early collections. It was at the AMNH (ST/3792), and it might in fact be linked to the US Exploring Expedition too (Walsh 2004). In the 1870s, Von Hügel also listed pandanus *liku*, worn by both sexes on ceremonial occasions (e.g. Hooper and Roth 1990:333-334). Similar artefacts, worn by men, can be found in modern Fiji.



4.47— NMNH, E3310, here folded in four

*Liku waloa* are relatively common skirts in 1830s/1840s collections — and after — and these were likely worn by men. Most are made of a simple waistband of braided *vau* — natural — into which the *waloa* fibres are inserted, and from which they dangle. Their length varies. Unfortunately, *waloa* becomes very brittle once dry. Many *liku* consequently suffered from museum storage and are now quite damaged (e.g. SI 4640). Most *liku waloa* were transported rolled up. Like *isala*, they lasted better when kept this way. Later specimens are sometimes decorated with glass beads (PEM E5139).

## *Clubs*



4.48— “Feejee Arms” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:278)

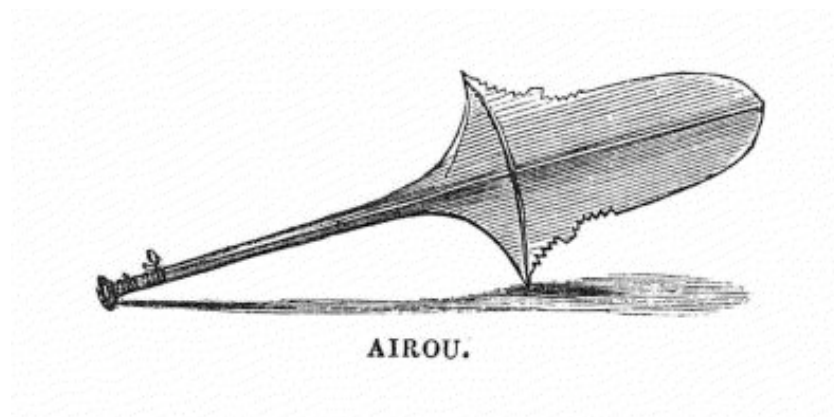
Clubs began to be traded from the earliest encounters, and imitations are still sold in tourist shops, where they are considered “cultural symbols” — by Fijian informants. They have long fascinated foreign visitors, including neighbouring islanders, being associated with the fierce reputation of Fijian warriors. 1830s/1840s collections contain series of them, illustrative of a great diversity of shapes, uses and quality. There are two main types, two-handed clubs and throwing clubs.



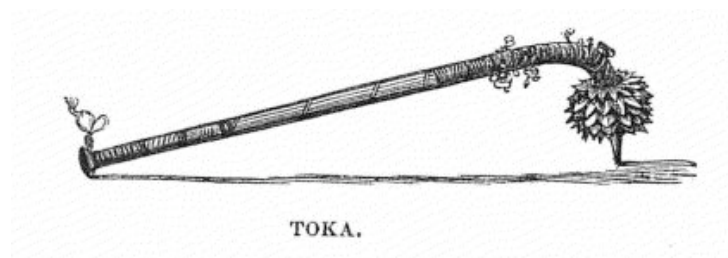
## Two-handed clubs



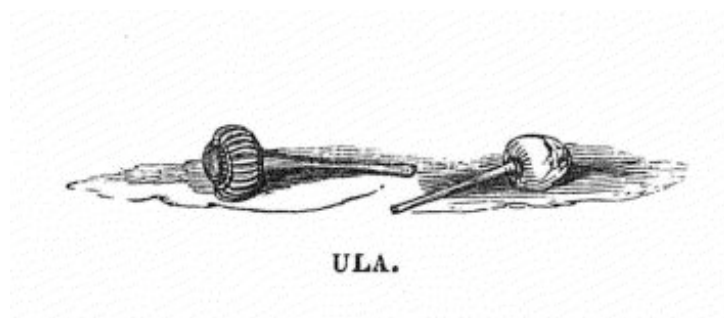
a



b



c



d

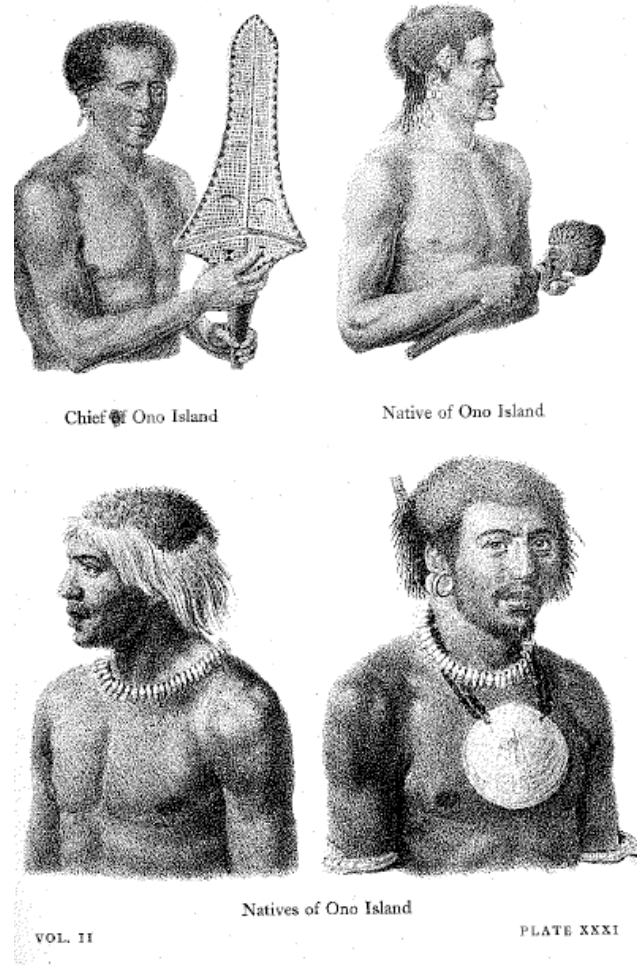
4.49— 4 types of Fijian clubs illustrated in Wilkes' narrative (Wilkes 1845, III:362)

In contrast to earlier collections, 1830s/1840s ensembles include extensively decorated specimens and high-ranking clubs used by priests and chiefs, as well as dancing clubs.



4.50— NMNH, E2855

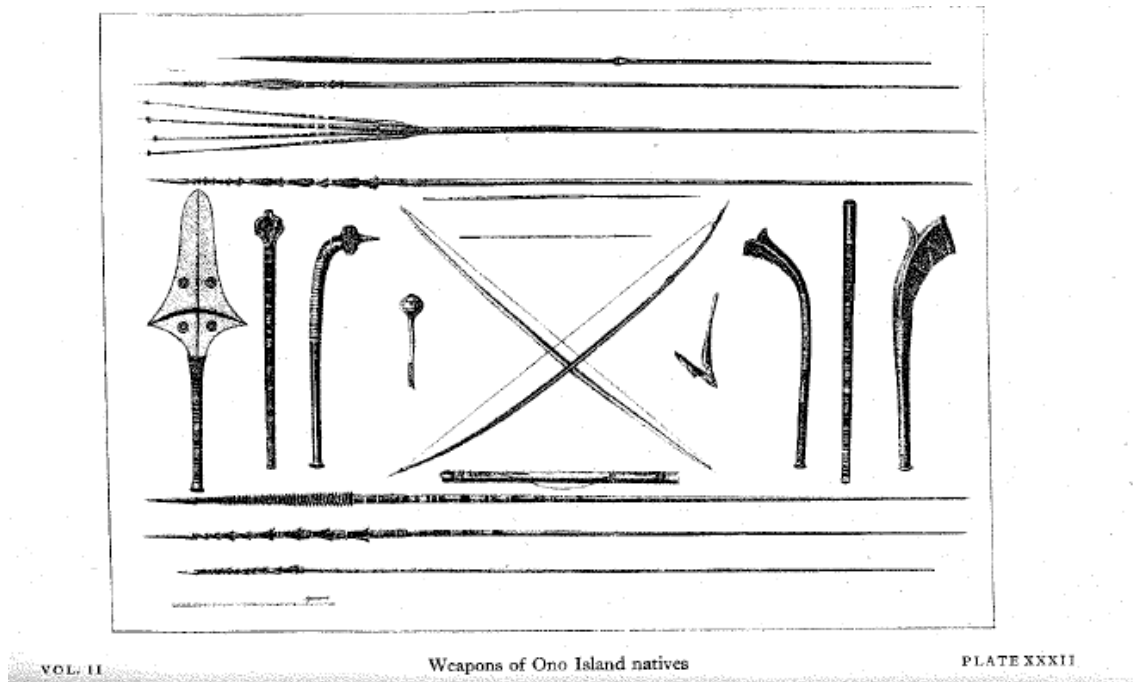
For instance, 1830s/1840s collections include a few *siriti* or *gugu*. These were described by Clunie as dancing and ceremonial clubs (2003b:110, fig.4c-f). Indeed, their shape does not seem functional for an effective weapon. Many specimens in museum collections have holes pierced on the edges of the head, as if the clubs were once decorated with fibres, pieces of *masi*, and/or feathers, shells, etc. Also, many *siriti* look old. The wood is usually damaged, which suggests that the clubs had been long used and perhaps abandoned before they were exchanged with Euro-Americans. In Washington are two *gugu* (E2855-2856) in the Wilkes collection that are wrapped in chequered sheaths of pandanus, one natural and the other black and white. These may corroborate the ceremonial use. Clunie depicted a similar sheath on a *kiakavo* club, also used for dancing (2003b:fig.1c).



4.51 — Plate XXXI (Debenham 1945, I:308 )

Another type of club little represented in 1820s-1840s collections is the *kinikini*, often described as priest's or chiefs' "paddle clubs." According to the size of its blade, it is said it could serve as a shield, especially against arrows (Clunie 2003b:127). The first *kinikini* known are probably the examples collected by Bellingshausen at Ono-i-Lau in 1820. Luckily, one of them was depicted, along with its Fijian owner, Tui Ono, whom Bellingshausen called Fio (Debenham 1945,II:XXXI). Another one (or the opposite side of the same one) was represented among other weapons likely to have been collected during Bellingshausen's visit (Debenham 1945,II: pl.XXXII). That item is particularly interesting because of two features. First, it is covered with white lime. Secondly, it is decorated with affronted triangles and crescent designs. The lime covering is quite rare on Fijian weapons. Little is known about such coating, but one could think that the white colour of the lime was relevant in itself, since white things was associated with chiefly status (e.g. *bulivula*, *isala*). Perhaps the light reflecting properties of the lime were also

an asset, both practically — on the battlefield — and symbolically — with the regard to the value attached to bright or shimmering things in Fiji (see chapter 2). The *kinikini* certainly rendered visible the chief's *mana*, quite impressively, while it also protected him in various ways. Perhaps, finally, it was a regional specificity. The moon crescents are also reminiscent of Tongan examples.



4.52— Plate XXXII (Debenham 1945, I:309)

Affronted triangles are only found on quite early clubs, from the 1830s (see below and previous chapter). Other *kinikini* seem to have been acquired by Bellingshausen's crew and brought back to Russia. A few of them have been identified by Barratt (1990). Yet, it is quite difficult from pictures only to identify any of those, now in Kazan (State Library University Main Library) or Saint Petersburg (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography) with Fio's club. Nevertheless, most *kinikini* linked with Bellingshausen's stopover at Ono-i-Lau seemed covered with lime. One now in St Petersburg has four affronted triangles (MAE, 736-17). Another (Kazan 160-17) shows three crescents, along with one diamond shape on its lower part (Barratt 1990:pl.6-8). Most *kinikini* from 1830s/1840s collections are not covered with lime, and they include other designs. See, for instance, the *kinikini* already discussed at the PEM and attributed to W.H. Brown's collection (PEM E4878). Its main decorative designs are *senivutu*

flowers, also found on *masi* cloths from that time until nowadays. This club, as well as some now in Russia, is lashed with a few strips of *voivoi* (pandanus).

Lashing is a distinguishing feature of many clubs from 1830s/1840s museum collections. While inlays appear not to have been used — or at least, where they were, they were not accessible to Euro-Americans — many clubs are covered with blackened and natural braids of *magimagi*. Such items are called *vividrasa* by Clunie (2003b:99), which evokes the brown colour of their wrapping (see also chapter 3). Most of these *magimagi* strings are extremely fine. The making of the cord and the wrapping of the club must have been a long and meaningful process, devoted to empower and distinguish the club with a combination of practical and visual assets (*Ibid.*:99).

*Magimagi* served to make and decorate powerful things, like miniature and architectural *burekalou* temples. In 1840, Wilkes described Tui Cakau “sitting, plaiting his sennit” (Wilkes 1845, III:169). Was the *magimagi* Tui Cakau had himself braided empowered with some of his *mana*?



4.53— NMNH, E3314

Since early times, *magimagi* rolls, some of them huge, were also traded as *iyau*. The Wilkes collection contains two such fine large rolls (SI 3314-15). They probably were prestigious gifts, traditionally reserved for important occasions (*solevu*; see Herle & Carreau 2013:fig.3.21). Yet, it seems that American surveyors did not appreciate them. Peale indeed only described them as convenient cordage (1846: n°1732-38).



4.54— MQB, 72.53.455

In the 1830s and 1840s, it seems that all kind of clubs could be *vividrasa*, whether they were functional or dancing weapons. The extent of the lashing varied. *Vividrasa* clubs appeared early in museum collections; they were doubtless impressive from a European and American viewpoint and more or less alienable. As early as the 1810s, Richardson brought back to Salem a *bowai* (PEM, E4880) which has a couple of *magimagi* knots at the butt. In the early 1820s, Vanderford also donated a *cali vividrasa* (PEM E4869). Bellingshausen also acquired some (e.g. MAE 736-12). In the 1830s, Eagleston and Brown collected a few specimens (e.g. PEM E4808, E4810, E4867) as well as Dumont d'Urville — including a *cali* pierced with affronted triangles (MQB 72.53.455). In Washington, the Wilkes collections contains a variety, including *vunikau* (SI E3229 and E3232), *kiakavo* (E3379, E2871) and *cali* (E2864).

### Throwing clubs (*iula*)

A few *iula* from 1820s-1850s collections have one or two knots of *magimagi*, sometimes as a repair, but the binding is never as extensive as on bigger clubs. Many *iula* are expertly carved at their grip and a few include some ivory inlays in 1830s/1840s collections. It seems that *iula* were ideal objects for Western visitors. They were distinctively Fijian, attractive from a Euro-American viewpoint, quite easily alienable and transportable. Although their shapes are less varied than two-handed clubs, 1830s/1840s collections show a great variety of them, including some fine specimens. The main types are *iula tavatava* and *iula drisia* — similar in shape to *iula kitu*, that can be distinguished by their pointed top and a flat head base.



4.55— NMNH, E2867

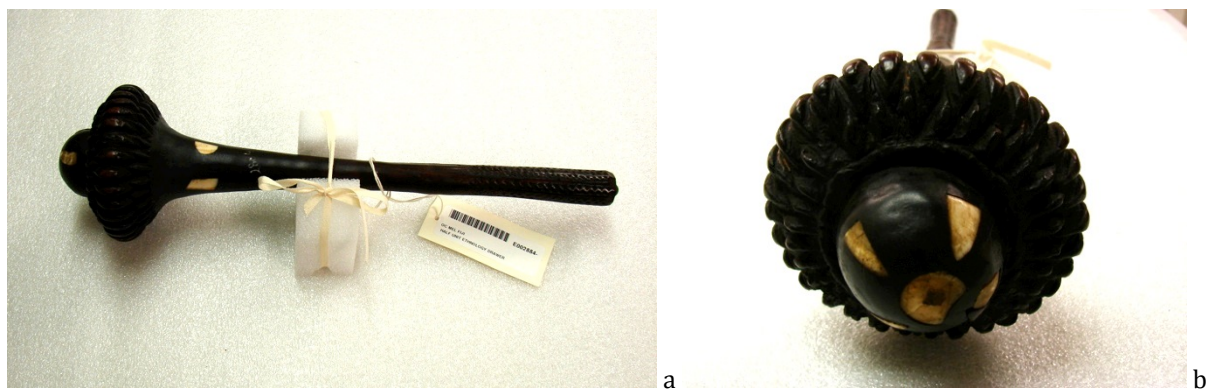
Among the most remarkable seen during this research are two very large *iula tavatava* in Washington (E2867 & E2885). Both have a dark glaze, as if they had been anointed. E2885 is carved with typical *tavatava* zigzags on both the top of the head — rounded button — and underneath, where the shaft flares into a serrated bulbous top. Both are pristine, as if they had been freshly made and not much used. This is even more striking for E2867, which is also the largest. E2885 seems to have been a little more handled. Its bottom part shows traces of use, and what was perhaps a suspension hole has now broken off. Very interestingly too, there is a shallow cavity at its bottom. Such depressions can also be found on larger clubs and might have been used as tiny *yaqona* cups for ritual consumption of very concentrated *yaqona* (Steven Hooper, personal communication, 2009). All these features suggest they were precious ceremonial weapons, rather than just functional ones.



4.56— MQB, 72.53.436

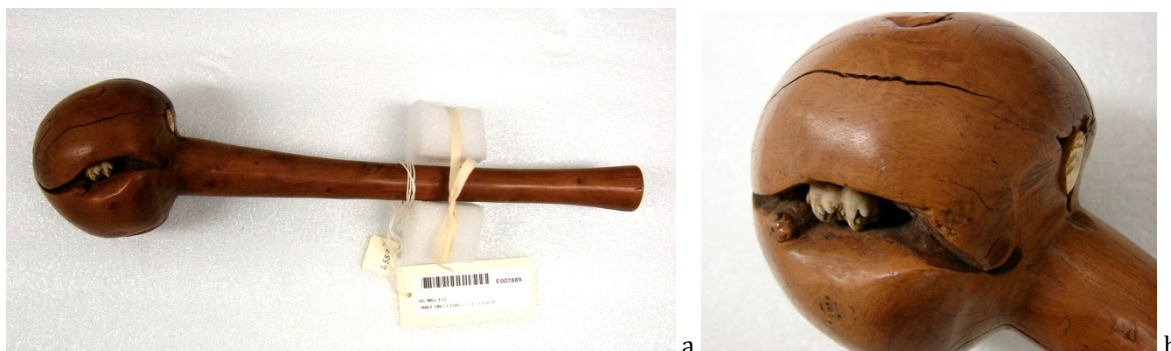


Also worthy of note are *iula tavatava vonotabua*, inlaid with ivory. There is one in Dumont d'Urville's collection (MQB 72.53.436). This is a fine example, with a single 4-branched ivory star at the top; another in the butt has thirteen points. Such inlays are typical of the earliest inlaid weapons found in museum collections. These insertions were probably the work of Tongan or Samoan craftsmen, and were skilfully made. The shapes of such inlays are reminiscent of carved patterns, found on Western Polynesian weapons generally. In contrast to later pieces, the ivory inlay is minimal. Yet, it suggests a patient and precise enterprise, so that each inlay looks as if it was completely part of the object, with smooth surfaces coinciding perfectly. Similar remarks also apply to the *totokia vonotabua* described above from Dumont d'Urville's first visit to Fiji (fig.1.10).



4.57— NMNH, E2884 (and detail)

In contrast, the Wilkes collection contains other, less fine *iula vonotabua*, perhaps linked to an increase in ivory in circulation and with a more regular production. There is one *iula tavatava* (SI E2884), which, like other specimens, has been soaked in oil. The oil still comes out today, giving it a sticky patina. The wood is consequently dark and contrasts strongly with the inlays. There are five of them on the head, and there were three on the top of the shaft but one is now missing. Holes were carved, roughly matching the size of the inlay, which was then forced into the cavity. The top inlay appears to have a small wooden peg that secures it in the middle. On one side of the head, one inserted piece has caused a crack. These insertions are quite big, and their shape seems quite rough, coarsely triangular or rounded. The inlay may have been a later addition to a finished club, which otherwise has a coherent form. In contrast to the above items, this *iula* shows signs of use, being well handled through the grip.



4.58— NMNH, E2889 (and detail)

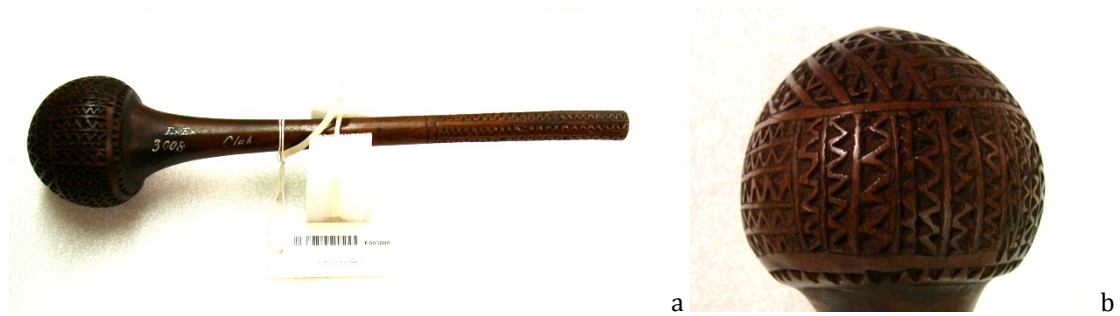
In Washington, there is also one *iula kitu* that has one tooth and one piece of whale ivory embedded in its head. Each piece seems to have been forced into a natural crack of the wood or into a roughly dug cavity. They do not match with the surface, and obviously do not aim to. The tooth — perhaps a dog's tooth — seems to have been carved to accentuate its serrated aspect. Other Fijian clubs include human teeth, possible a record of a kill (Clunie 2003a:fig.192). It is possible that the relevance of such inlays was held in the piece itself, and in the ritual insertion, rather than in a perfectly finished aspect. It must have been a quite spectacular and powerful action. This ritual “mutilation” of the club is consistent with other stigmata inflicted on the human body, or on clubs, in ritual circumstances. For instance, a few clubs, especially *iula*, have notches or carved dots grouped in series of four or ten. These are likely to register ritual counting of ceremonial nights — the counting units of most Fijian events (e.g. death, birth, first kill etc.). A few *iula* from the 1830s/1840s show such marks (e.g. SI E3129).



4.59— NMNH, E3129

The latter example (SI E3129) also belongs to a rare type of *iula tavatava*, already discussed in chapter 3 and quite distinctive (e.g. SI E3022, E3129; PEM E5067). Among

other rare types, *iula bulibuli* are a minority in museum collections from the 1830s and 1840s (SI E2887), along with *iula gasau* (see PEM E4837). Many variations within common types can be found. For instance, one *iula kitu* in the Wilkes collection has its head carved with *tavatava* zigzags (SI E3008).



4.60— NMNH, E3008 (and detail)

Finally, another category of club should be mentioned, for they seem to have appeared in the 1840s in museum collections. These look like early “fakes,” or “replicas.” Some probably were, other may have been low quality artefacts. The Wilkes collection contains several of them. E3097 (SI) for instance, has obviously been made in imitation of an *iula tavatava*. Yet, although its dimensions are quite usual, it is not made in hardwood, but a lighter species. Also, this object is not balanced, so that it cannot be regarded as a functional weapon. Perhaps it was made by a White settler, or a non-carver Fijian interested in trading with foreign visitors. If so, the strategy obviously worked, since this item was not distinguished from the rest of the club collection (see Peale 1846), which is surprising given the early research of “authenticity” Schindlbeck emphasized (1993). Other specimens may have been made by sailors themselves. They would therefore parallel the indigenous replicas of European items, discussed in chapter 2 as emulations of contact with reference to Thomas (2012). Many seamen had carpentry skills; carving was a common pastime. Thus, some fake *iula tavatava* almost resemble pieces of Western furniture (e.g. SI E3075, E3136). Some of these awkward specimens, however, might have been children’s toys. These were made of light wood, and quite roughly finished (e.g. SI E3026; MQB 72.53.435). Some museum specimens resemble proper *iula*, but smaller than usual (e.g. SI E2883).



4.61— NMNH, E3097



4.62— NMNH, E3136

## Other items

### *Bowls and dishes*

Wilkes and d'Urville's collections contain a number of *yaqona* or *kava* bowls — *kava* is the generic name for the drink made from *Piper methysticum*. Most of these are the circular *tanoa* type, but a few have pointed ends, reminiscent of a *bavelo* canoe already described in chapter 3 (e.g. SI E3356; PEM E5092; BM Oc1856,0709.22 (Denham collection)).



4.63— NMNH, E3356

Nearly all of them are under 45cm in diameter. Although large bowls were used in the presence of foreigners, they were not exchanged with them, being either too prized or, perhaps, burdensome for sailors because of their dimensions. Very large bowls exist in later collections (e.g. BM Oc9076, 1865 Brenchley collection).





4.64— “Reception des Francais à Pao” (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, Atlas: pl.83)

*Tanoa*, with four cylindrical or conical legs, are the most frequent in the collections (e.g. MHNT AC.FI.108). Few have kept their *watabu* (e.g. PEM 5094), and even fewer have decorative cowries. Some “sacred cords” may have fallen apart. Perhaps also, they were not preserved because they were not considered as an important part of the object. This absence, however, suggest that the specimens Westerners acquired were not *tabu* when exchanged.

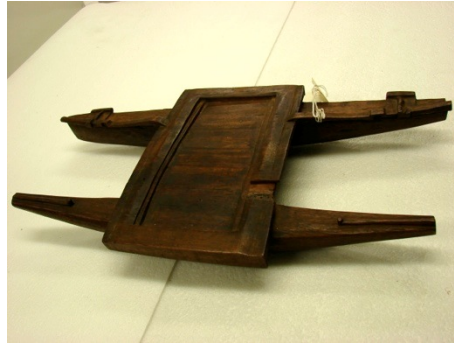
Bowls of the *tanoa* type were popular artefacts. Many explorers saw them in use because *yaqona* drinking using *tanoa* bowls was a public ritual to honour chiefs and visitors. *Yaqona* drinking was therefore a visible custom, culturally significant and easy to illustrate. Small bowls may have been a relatively cheap bargain for Fijians. In contrast, large bowls, devoted to important public occasions, were exceptional. The *tanoa* observed in museum collections, including large ones, are usually made from a single piece of *vesi* wood. These were mostly carved in southern Lau and Cakaudrove. The dimension of the tree necessary for the making of large bowls by specialist carpenters must have contributed to their high value (see Hooper 1982:53-63).



FEEJEE AVA-BOWLS AND DRINKING-CUPS.

4.65— “Feejee ava-bowls and drinking-cups” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:73)

Wilkes and d’Urville’s collections also contain a few dishes (*sedre* or *dari*) and platters (*dave*) used for ceremonial anointment and ritual consumption of *yaqona* (Clunie 2003a:fig.130-137). By comparison with *tanoa*, their forms are more diverse. Like figures and “oracles” (above) they illustrate access to objects with religious significance. Collections mainly include tripod oil dishes, most of them carved in a leaf-shape, sometimes completed with a pointed protuberance at their front part, evocative of a *leba* flower. Salem’s collection contains a few of them (e.g. E15012, E20737). Wilkes’ collection shows a greater variety, including small specimens (SI E2823, E2824), a few with circular bowls (SI E2821, E2825) and a couple of typical leaf-like examples (SI E2822, E2826). Thus, 1830s/1840s collections began to include well-known forms, largely found in later collections. Among those are dishes in double-canoe form, such as E3584 (SI, Wilkes) and Oc.1800 (BM, Milne from HMS *Herald* who visited Fiji three times from 1855 to 1857). Human-shaped *yaqona* dishes made their appearance too. For example, there is one specimen at the BM (Oc.1842,1210.127), acquired by Belcher of HMS *Sulphur*, who was in Fiji at the same time as the US Exploring Expedition. On the other hand, “winged” dishes (e.g. SI E23900 from Isaac Brower, US Consul in Fiji during the 1860s) and round oil plates (e.g. SI E23899, Brower) do not appear in earlier collections. It is the same with *burau* priests’ dishes on stands, which were to become emblematic of Fijian arts (e.g. FM 55.40). Among the earliest found, a few belong to the *Herald*’s collection (1855-57) at the BM (e.g. Oc1857,0318.2 & Oc1857,0318.1) and others to the *Curacoa*’s (1865, e.g. BM Oc.6541).



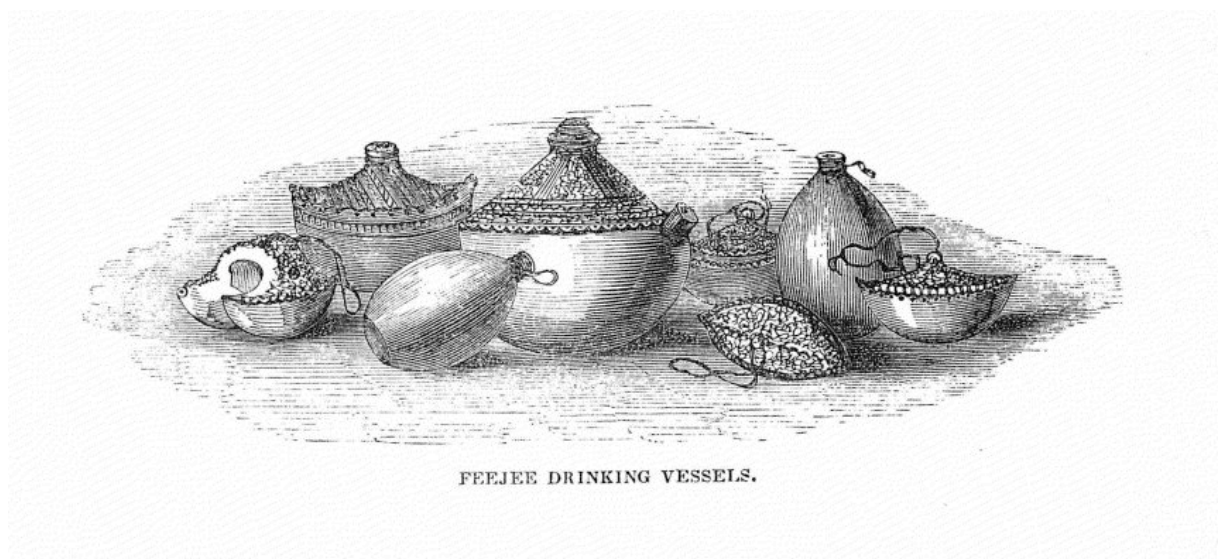
4.66— NMNH, E3584

A few *bilo* cups make their appearance in 1830s/1840s collections too. Most of them are simple, made of half a coconut shell, carefully polished. A few, however, have a *magimagi* handle, distinctive of priestly and chiefly implements (e.g. SI E2989; BM Oc.1802). According to Clunie (2003a:147), such cups were notably used in Western Vitilevu, by priests during *burau* rituals.



4.67— NMNH, E2989

### Pottery



4.68— “Feejee Pottery” by A. T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:146)



In some areas, *yaqona* was also drunk from clay *sedre* or *dave* (Clunie 2003a:fig.12). Yet, most pottery found in 1830s/1840s collections are small varnished pots with typical Fijian features. Three types of *saqa* drinking vessels are mostly found. First, there are spherical bottles with a short cylindrical neck at the top and a small beak on the side. These are sometimes plain, sometimes decorated on their shoulders (e.g. MQB 72.56.734; SI E2824, E2819, E3147). Along with them, *saqa* made in the shape of a *vudi* — or *tabua* — are quite numerous (e.g. MQB 72.56.733; SI E2813, E2820). According to Clunie, these were priest vessels (2003a:fig.16). On most of them, the top half has decorative incisions, occasionally completed with small patches of clay. Finally, there are flat circular models, with a large mouth on the top and a decorated superior half (e.g. MQB 72.56.737; SI E2818).



4.69— MQB, 72.56.733



4.70— MQB, 72.56.734

Fijian pottery fascinated Europeans. Yet, again, they do not appear to have had access to all shapes and sizes at that time. Perhaps resulting from subsequent evolutions, some forms were not exchanged yet. A difference in size can already be observed between d'Urville and Wilkes' pottery. Some wares that Wilkes and his men acquired are quite huge in comparison with d'Urville's specimens. It seems that the number of big pots increased in museums during the nineteenth century. The shape of alienable pots also changed. 1830s/1840s specimens rarely have more than one lobe, two at the most. Subsequently, these have a tendency to multiply. Wilkes and d'Urville collections only include specimens shaped like double canoes (*drua*) — or double plantain (e.g. SI E2816, MHNT AC.FI.41). Later collections show a greater variety, with numerous multi-lobed *saqamoli*, reminiscent of citrus fruits (*moli*) connected by tubular channels from their top (e.g. SI, E4435, E23906; BM Oc1857,0318.3). *Saqamoli* are common in late nineteenth-century collections and other pots make their appearance,

such as turtle-shaped *saqa* (FM 30/2745, 2746, 2151, 2152) and composite ones (Clunie 2003a:fig.18).



4.71— NMNH, E2816

### *Combs and hair pins*

Fijian combs (*iseru*) and hair pins (*imilamila*) have already been discussed. *Iseru balabala* are quite numerous in the Wilkes collections (e.g. SI E3187-3189 & E3193), along with a few *imilamila* following similar conventions. Like the *iseru balabala* described in chapter 3 they include blackened *balabala* sticks and natural copper-shade coconut fibres (e.g. SI E3187-3189). No turtle-shell specimen was found in the Wilkes or Dumont d'Urville collection. Interestingly though, a few of these ornaments mimic elements of Fijian daily life in their décor. For example, some hair pins are crowned with small pandanus rolls, similar to actual rolls of dried pandanus leaves (e.g. SI E3194-1).



a



b

4.72— NMNH, E3194-1 (and detail)

Others objects, combs and hair pins, have a pandanus bow at their top. It gives them the overall appearance of tiny flat *burekalou*, especially in the case of *iseru*. The body of the comb recalls the trapezoidal shape of the temple's roof, while the pandanus part evokes its cross-beam (e.g. SI: E3190, E3191, E3196, E3198). This is particularly interesting with regards to the miniaturization concerns mentioned in chapter 3. Talking about *tabu* items — in contact with the head of high-ranking individuals — the visual resemblance to a *burekalou* must have been meaningful. In Salem, one *iseru* like this is topped with a bone, perhaps a bird bone, instead of pandanus (PEM E5170).



4.73— NMNH, E3191



4.74— PEM, E5170

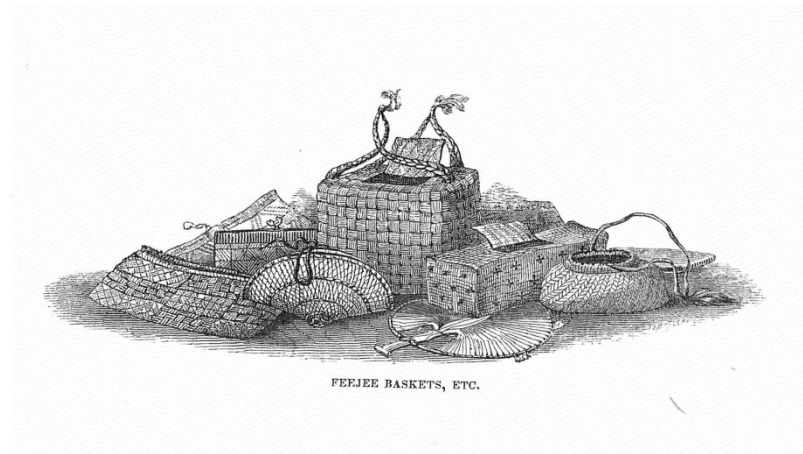
## Basketry



4.75— “Woman Braiding” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:358)

Along with pottery, basketry is a craft in which Fijian craftswomen particularly distinguished themselves — and still do. A few productions found in 1830s/1840s collections are reminiscent of Tongan and Samoan artefacts. Some were even important objects of exchange between Eastern Fiji and those groups (Kaepler 1978b). They

include *kato alu* (e.g. SI E3598), already found in Cook's collections (Kaeppler 2009:196-197, fig.291-294).



4.76— “Feejee Baskets, &c.” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:213)

Among typical 1830s/1840s items are flat baskets, usually described as bags or satchels in museums and called *rubu* by Clunie (2003a:fig.45). They were found in all collections studied during this research, with a variety of décors and sizes. They also illustrate a continuity, for some were still acquired by Denham in the 1850s (PRM; BM), Brower (NMNH, SI) and Brenchley in the 1860s (MMBAG; BM). Their outside surface is made of narrow strips of *voivoi*. Those are dyed in various shades, mainly black and reddish brown, as in *masi* stencilled decors. They are woven into alternating patterns, from simple chequer boards to more elaborate designs. These are often superposed to each other, in such a way that when you look at the *rubu* from various distances and angles you see different levels of its décor (e.g. SI E3239). Contrasting with that fine outside, the inner part is usually made of coarser strips (<2cm wide), natural in shade and simply plaited. Handles of *magimagi* cord complete the bag.



4.77— NMNH, E3302



4.78— NMNH, E3239



Most 1830s/1840s examples are multi-coloured (e.g. SI E3249, E3250, E3246). Some are quite huge (e.g. SI E3300-3302). In the Wilkes collection, there are also specimens mostly made of natural pandanus strips, finely woven around a central black and white décor of a few centimetres in width and running all along the *rubu*, lengthwise (e.g. SI E3243, E3251). Those with the most intricate designs remain the most impressive (e.g. SI E3239, E3240 & E3776). They recall other woven crafts (e.g. mats), as well as other Western Polynesian designs. Yet, above all, they show an exceptional *maestria* in their making, which certainly seduced Western art lovers.



4.79— NMNH, E3243



4.80— NMNH, E3251

### *Musical instruments*

Musical instruments used by Fijians were also widely spread in the Western Polynesian region and beyond. Slit gongs (*lali*) and shell-conchs (*davui*) were observed and acquired during 1830s/1840s surveys, including large examples (SI E2827). More interesting, perhaps, are bamboo nose-flutes (*bituucu*). Along with pan-pipes, they were quite extensively acquired from Fijians and can be found in most 1830s/1840s collections.



4.81— NMNH, E2902 (and details)

The Wilkes collection comprises a range of these. It includes an interesting specimen whose scratched and burnt décor consists of traditional patterns along with several figures of Western ships and at least one gun (SI E2902). This time, a Fijian item is evocative of Western things rather than the opposite (cf. inlaid guns). Such explicit references, also found on clubs and progressively other objects as well (notably barkcloths and whale's teeth), bear testimony to their level of incorporation. Here, boats and guns seem to illustrate a Fijian concern, together with a certain acquaintance with foreign things, now a daily part of the Fijian environment.

Similarly, later, written names, words or letters were to show on objects, in relation to literacy encouraged by missionary activity to get Fijians to read and write. Their teaching led to a distinctive handwriting type, in thick capital letters, visible on museum objects (e.g. PEM, E3379). In both cases (drawings and writings), this may have been a way for Fijians to empower special objects, with distinctive identities and values.

### Political violence

Transactions between Fijians and Western surveyors were not only material. Often they were political and, sometimes, they turned violent. The promotion of national interests (e.g. commerce and navigation) and the protection of fellow citizens — and by extension every Westerner — came first in d'Urville's and Wilkes' instructions (Dumont d'Urville, 1841-54, I:IX & XII; Wilkes 1845, I:xxvii & xxix). However, in both cases, moderation and

forbearance were requested. For instance, Wilkes' instructions stated: "The Expedition is not for conquest, but discovery" (Wilkes 1845, I:xxix). Yet, in Fiji, both d'Urville and Wilkes chose violence over diplomacy when they considered that they, or their fellow countrymen, had been unjustly attacked. The final parts of this chapter try to understand how, why and with what consequences.

### *Competitive diplomacy*

In essence, all exchange relations may be considered as competitions and struggles for power (Mauss 2004[1923], Appadurai 1986). In Fiji, traditional exchanges certainly followed that trend. In the present case, political, commercial and intellectual backgrounds exacerbated that competitive aspect, within each party as well as between them. Fijians wanted to trade with Westerners and many chiefdoms hoped to loom large on that market. Likewise, d'Urville and Wilkes hoped to do better than their peers in terms of surveying, politics and collection making. They also wanted to impress Fijians, and *vice versa*. Both Fijians and Western officials made diplomatic gifts they considered competitive. Similarly, they manifested their strength and power on many occasions. For example, we already mentioned the club dance at Levuka, but we may also remember Tanoa's visit to the *Vincennes*. When the Vunivalu was on the flagship, Wilkes had the guns fired and instructed the armed marines to go through their exercises in order to impress his guest (Wilkes 1845, III:58-61).

Those competitive demonstrations, including exchanges of presents, can also be regarded as alliance makers. Yet, Euro-Americans sometimes resorted to formal contracts as well. Wilkes, for instance, brought specific rules and regulations with him, which he carefully had signed by most high-ranking individuals he encountered in Fiji. This "code of laws" aimed to protect Westerners, in case of wreck and other danger — including attack. The signatories were supposed to ease the anchorage of Western vessels and provide the crews with food, refreshments and protection in exchange for harbour taxes. These regulations were supposed to have judiciary implications too. They recommended that deserters or "any person guilty of a crime of murder, upon any foreigner" would be delivered to Western representatives (Wilkes 1845, III:431-432).



### *Rewa, Viwa, Malolo: Western retaliation*

Increased European visits to Fiji during the 1830s increased the number of Fiji-West conflicts — some of which had their roots in local disagreements. In 1834, two ships were assaulted and their crew massacred by Fijians. The *Aimable Joséphine*, captain Bureau, was attacked at Viwa. The *Charles Doggett*, captain Bachelor, met her fate near Kadavu. In addition, at the end of Wilkes' visit, an incident occurred in Malolo which caused the death of two American officers, including Wilkes' nephew. Retaliation followed. From the exemplary punishment of Veidovi, the young chief of Rewa held responsible for the death of Bachelor and his crew, to the punitive expeditions sent to Viwa and Malolo, there was an escalation of violence.

### *The Veidovi case: exemplary punishment and hostages*

Once Wilkes knew that Veidovi would be blamed for the massacre of the *Charles Doggett's* crew (Wilkes 1845, III:109-111), he sent the *Peacock* to Rewa. There, captain Hudson was to "capture" Veidovi and submit him to trial. It is clear that, from the American point of view, the whole affair was properly conducted and with all moderation that could have been expected. Veidovi was tried for murder and found guilty after his own confession. His punishment was to be sent to the United States:

"He would be shown every thing in America, that he might see what a great people we were and the vast difference there was between our country and Fegee, he would be learned to speak our language and then returned to his Home, in the hope that during the remainder of his life he might by his good offices repay in some measure the evil he had done. He would then know that to kill a white man was the very worst thing a Fegee man could do" (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:174).

Western officials of the nineteenth century had developed a certain superiority complex, highly ethnocentric. In contrast to their lower-class fellows, and in opposition with their predecessors, more curious and less judgmental, they felt entitled to set an example. Veidovi died from fever on his arrival in the United-States, in 1842.



4.82— “Vendovi” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:127)

Behind that punishment, the technique used to capture Veidovi is interesting. Hudson invited Rokotui Dreketi — Banuve — and his court to visit the *Peacock*. When he noticed that Veidovi was missing among his guests, he decided to hold them hostage, until Veidovi surrendered. In spite of the compensatory presents finally made to the chief and his suite (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:174), the stratagem was brutal. However, it was a common practice. Trading and exploring expeditions often took hostages in order to secure transactions. Fijians resorted to same tactic. For example, Tui Macuata asked for an American officer to be held as a hostage ashore while he visited the *Peacock* (Wilkes 1845, III:239). Such events impacted future relations. When Belcher, for instance, visited the archipelago shortly after, he noticed a greater defiance from Rewans that complicated his own interactions with them (Belcher 1843, II:38–39).

### The Bureau case: attempted retaliation and political implications

On the 17th October 1838, Dumont d’Urville sent a punitive expedition to a town he called “Piva” (Viwa). This operation was intended to be a “bright revenge” on Bureau’s murderers: Viwa’s chief, known in the literature as Namosi or Namosimalua (called “Nakalassé” by d’Urville), his son, Franck, and his nephew, Verani (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, IV:201).

Bureau was an obscure French seaman, engaged in the *bêche-de-mer* trade (Broc 2003:98). For the sake of his commerce, it seems he used to make and break alliances with local chiefs, getting involved in local conflicts. As usual from the early 1800s (Im

Thurn & Wharton 1925, Cary 1998), he transported warriors to battlefields and traded firearms until somebody had him killed. From the few sources that exist on Bureau, he was an opportunist and an untrustworthy person. However, he was French and d'Urville believed that he had to avenge his death, in the name of France.



4.83— “Incendie du village de Piva” (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, Atlas: pl.82)

The French officers set the town on fire and plundered it. It is likely that they hoped to capture Namosimalua and his men and collect interesting artefacts. Unfortunately for d’Urville, Tui Viwa became aware of the French arrival. He fled with his people and everything precious. From Rocquemaurel’s journal (1837-40), only torn sleeping mats and cooking implements remained, along with trivial pieces of basketry. This, again, provides information about the Fijian scale of value. On one hand, Viwa’s inhabitants prized most things enough to take them away from Europeans. On the other hand, it means that the French sailors could not acquire much outside proper transactions. Apart from a few local objects and pieces of wreckage from Bureau’s ship, nothing was brought back: no varnished pottery, no women’s skirts or any other personal adornment, and, of course, nothing made of ivory or related to religious practices. Nevertheless, Dumont d’Urville was satisfied.

Of course, he was not aware of how similar his actions were to those of Bureau. He had involved his ships and crews in local conflicts. Indeed, by destroying Viwa’s town, d’Urville weakened Namosimalua, one of Tanoa’s rivals. Tanoa had just recovered from the rebellion against him. In 1837, with the help of his son Seru (Cakobau), he had

recovered his authority, but in 1838 his position was still quite fragile (Calvert 2003:21; Wilkes 1845, III:17). The French punitive expedition against Namosi probably helped Tanoa regain some strength. The informant who accused Namosi of Bureau's death was a young Tongan chief named "Latchika" (Lajika or Lajike). He frequently travelled between Bau and Lau to supervise the building of canoes (Young 1982:39). Resident of Lakeba, he had been baptized in January 1838, after he had previously converted in Tonga (Schütz 1977:103). He was thus one of the first Christians of rank in Lakeba and an important ally of the missionaries.

Lajika certainly encouraged d'Urville to retaliate. After he guided the *Astrolabe* to Viwa, he advised d'Urville to lower the French flag in order to surprise Namosi (Dumont d'Urville 1841-54, IV:191). He answered d'Urville's questions with confidence and assured him of Bau's support. Bau's harbour even sheltered the *Astrolabe* and *Zélée* during the attack. After the French "victory," Tanoa welcomed the officers in Bau, where they attended a *yaqona* ceremony and a *magiti*, just like allies (fig.4.64).

The French sailors exchanged massively with Bauans and took the opportunity to visit the town and observe local customs and behaviour. Each officer's journal provides vivid descriptions of that stopover. D'Urville carefully described the *yaqona* ceremony and the *magiti*. Unfortunately, again, he barely mentioned the transactions in which *he* was involved, including those in Tanoa's house, where the Vunivalu received him. He only recorded what he gave to Tanoa; two empty bottles. Later, aboard the *Astrolabe*, to Tanoa and "Latchika" he gave some pieces of cloth, two big sailing knives and two medals of the expedition (Dumont d'Urville 1841-54, IV:213). Of what he received in exchange, we only know that he made commercial arrangements with Tanoa for the protection of French vessels (Couturaud 1986:493-494).

Missionary accounts mention another consequence of these events. Namosi was disappointed by his defeat and weakened politically. He started to look for new allies. From the missionary point of view, he sought a more powerful God. Shortly after the burning of his town, he asked Reverend Cross — settled nearby in Rewa — to send him a convert, who could teach him things about the *lotu* (Christianity). Soon Namosi declared he was in favour of the *lotu*, though he never officially converted or renounced polygamy or cannibalism (Faure 1929:36). However, Calvert considered that Namosi's interest in Christianity was a decisive asset for the Christian missions of Fiji. It made

possible the settlement of Methodist missionaries in Viwa, and there key conversions occurred. Viwa was also a strategic location *vis-à-vis* Bau.

### Malolo: escalation of violence

Both primary and secondary sources describe extensively “the massacre in Malolo.” It is not easy to determine what happened clearly, but a fairly accurate sequence of events can be drawn from various accounts. In July 1840 the U.S. Exploring Expedition was running out of food. At Malolo Island (west of Vitilevu), Lieutenant Underwood decided to look for provisions ashore and bartered with the natives, notwithstanding official instructions. In order to secure the transaction, a hostage was held on one boat (Wilkes 1845, III:284) while a well-armed American party negotiated ashore. The hostage escaped. Whether the first shot preceded or followed that incident is unclear. Wilkes acknowledged that one officer shot over the hostage’s head “which did not stop him” (*Ibid.*:286). In any event, the situation grew into a fight ashore and Lieutenant Underwood as well as Midshipman Wilkes Henry — Charles Wilkes’ nephew — died.

In his narrative, Wilkes wrote:

“I had no hesitation in determining to inflict the punishment it merited, and this, not by the burning of the towns alone, but in the blood of the plotters and actors in the massacre.” (Wilkes 1845, III:288)

The Americans attacked two towns, which they called Sualib and Arro:

“The former was the residence of the principal actors in the massacre. Upon this I intended to inflict the heaviest blow. The latter, whose inhabitants had also taken a part in the tragedy... I determined to burn to the ground.” (Wilkes 1845, III:289)

The Americans destroyed both towns and killed around one hundred Fijians before peace was restored. Eventually, the inhabitants of Malolo returned the personal belongings of the two dead officers and offered other tokens of peace, including “a young native woman” who “held a white cock in her arms” (Wilkes 1845, III:296). In this, the defeated paralleled local practices of *isoro*. Wilkes refused most of the gifts and, rather, obtained food and water supplies (Philbrick 2003:230). At Malolo, the American party made a plunder of native weapons, along with fishing nets and *masi* cloths (Wilkes 1845, III:294), but they were not always so fortunate in violent actions (*Ibid.*:258).

Upon his return to America, Wilkes had to defend this excessive retaliation before the court, which finally ruled in his favour. In 1840, most crew members were not satisfied. Many, like Reynolds, considered that

“... altogether, the number of Americans and other whites that have been destroyed by the Fegees is so great, that if the Islands were to be depopulated entirely the retribution would not be enough to repay the loss of life and property.” (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:195)

On the other hand, Wilkes considered that “the punishment was sufficient and effectual, while it was accompanied, as far as it could be, with mercy” (Wilkes 1845, III:301).

These punitive operations occurred in a tense climate. Only a few days before the death of Underwood and Henry Wilkes, the crew members had set another town, Tye, on fire, after its inhabitants had taken an American cutter. It is likely that something changed in the American attitude, between the exemplary and rather peaceful punishment of Veidovi and the massive revenge on Sualib and Arro. According to Joyce, “the voyagers’ perspectives on and relations with these people were altered, even skewed, once Fijians were confirmed to be man-eaters” (2001:105). Like elsewhere, “cannibalism was the rub” (Douglas 1999:79).

## Witnessing the other: cannibalism, race and sciences

### *Cannibalism*

For long, cannibalism<sup>24</sup> has fascinated and scarred Europeans. During the nineteenth century, Euro-Americans saw Fijians as the archetype of cannibals and this impacted Fiji-West relations.

### Beyond humankind: cannibal monsters

From children’s stories evoking man-eating monsters to contemporary cinema (e.g. Jonathan Demme, *The Silence of the Lambs*, 1991), cannibalism has had an important part in Western collective imagination. This psychological background may explain why it both frightens and captivates (Warner 1998; Lindenbaum 2004). In the nineteenth century, Pacific exploration obliged European and American sailors to face their childhood fears. In all sailors’ accounts, similar feelings can be found: curiosity, apprehension and scepticism. The intrusion of cannibalism into their grown-up reality had to be witnessed, or it would be regarded only as a legend or a prejudice. However,

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<sup>24</sup> It is not our place to step into vocabulary debates about what should be called anthropophagy, cannibalism or man-eating (Arens 1979; Arens 1998; Obeyesekere 1998; Little et al. 2006; Arens & Sahlins 1979; Sahlins 1983). This thesis uses mostly “cannibalism” because, although it is a loaded term, it has a historical value. “Anthropophagy” or “man-eating” may be used to avoid repetitions.

once people were confirmed to have anthropophagic practices, they were barely considered human anymore. Rocquemaurel exemplified this perfectly, when he was in Mangareva (Gambier Islands):

“About that [cannibalism], my incredulity is so great that only a tangible evidence could overcome it, because, according to me, cannibalism characterizes people better than skin colour, facial angle or skull’s depression. I think that, above all, man-eaters must be separated from the great family of peoples.” (Rocquemaurel 1837-40, my translation)<sup>25</sup>

Some sailors even considered that cannibals were a plague on humankind and that even God must have turned his back on them; they could therefore as well be eradicated. For example, Reynolds wrote about Fijians:

“They seem to be one of the races of men that are afflicted with the curse of God ... and the sooner they are extinct upon the earth, the better, which event I heartily pray for.” (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:195)

Fortunately, not all were as extreme.

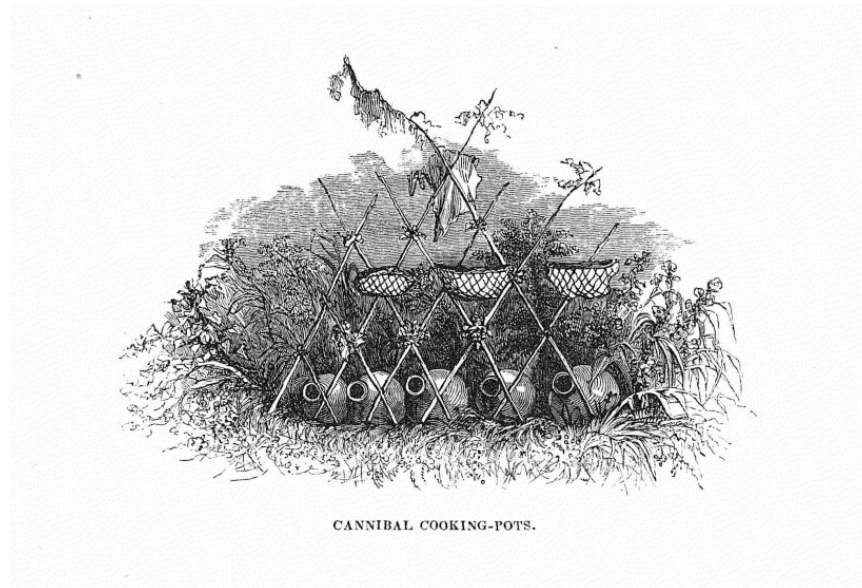
### Cultural relativism: problems of sources and interpretation

Most explorers regarded cannibalism as exotic. They extensively described it in their accounts and gladly collected and depicted cannibal-evoking things, like artefacts made of human bones (e.g. *saulaca*) or teeth, but also weapons and even pots. This was part of a Western fantasy. Some researchers refer to it as the “cannibal scene” (Hulme 1998). By extension, everything Fijian tended to be regarded as cannibal. When Veidovi died, a *New York Herald* article explained that his illness was due to the deprivation of human flesh (Joyce 2001:145) and when Agate represented Fijian cooking pots, they were of course “cannibal pots.”

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<sup>25</sup> « A cet égard, je suis d’une incrédulité qui ne doit céder qu’à une évidence palpable, car, suivant moi, le cannibalisme est plus fait pour caractériser un peuple que ne peuvent l’être la couleur de la peau, l’angle facial ou la dépression du crâne. Je pense qu’avant tout les mangeurs d’homme doivent être séparés de la grande famille des peuples. »





4.84— “Cannibal Cooking-Pots” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III: 111)

This excess obliges modern researchers to exercise extreme caution and healthy scepticism on available sources (Arens 1979; Obeyesekere 1998; Little *et al.* 2006). Nevertheless, the existence of Fijian cannibalism seems beyond question. Several sources, including material artefacts, attest it. Comparisons help to avoid naïve conclusions and misunderstandings.

Some researchers have tended to trivialise cannibalism (e.g. Harris 1977). As early as 1840, Pickering, who was certainly the most open-minded scientist on the U.S. Exploring Expedition, tried to regard Fijian cannibalism as “just another custom” for him to witness (Pickering 1854; Joyce 2001). Yet, it was not. In cases like this, one may definitely agree with Thomas’ critique of cultural relativism (1991). When excessive, it leads us to overlook key features we should rather examine. Fijian cannibalism was anything but trivial. It was a complex, extremely powerful ceremonial act. It was surrounded with *tabu* and not considered commonplace (Sahlins 1978a, 1978b, 1983). Therefore, for both Fijians and Euro-Americans, cannibalism was a loaded practice.

Most sailors saw cannibalism as an unforgivable act of savagery and they certainly did not acknowledge what it represented for Fijians. They probably could not, regarding both their prejudices and the fact that they never really became acquainted with the Fijian spiritual life in such early times. It is possible that, on the other hand, Fijians understood better what cannibalism meant for their Western exchange partners. They were afraid and horrified by it, which is partially the intent of cannibalism in Fiji

(Sahlins 1978a). Therefore, although it is excessive to say that Fijians created their cannibalism in response to contacts with Westerners, Obeyesekere (1998) seemed right in explaining that they might have used it as a tool in their diplomatic and commercial relations with Euro-Americans. Several passages in sailors' accounts could be read through that lens. During the Wilkes expedition, one event illustrates that trend. Most officers recorded it in their journals. On the 2nd or 3rd July 1840, several canoes met the *Peacock* off the island of Tavea (north of Vanualevu). There was a rumour that a "cannibal feast" was going on ashore. One canoe brought confirmation:

"... a canoe came alongside, bringing the skull yet warm from the fire, much scorched, and marked with the teeth of those who had eaten of it. The brain had been roasted and taken out, as well as the eyes and teeth. Another canoe came alongside with some roasted flesh in it.

"While Mr. Spieden and others were agreeing with the natives for the purchase of the skull for a fathom of cloth, a native stood near him holding something in his right hand, which he soon applied to his mouth, and began to eat. To their utter astonishment they discovered it to be the eye of the dead man, which the native had plucked from the skull a few moments before. So revolting and unexpected a sight produced a feeling of sickness in many; this ocular proof of their cannibal propensities fully satisfied them. The native was eating it, and exclaiming at the same time, 'Vinaka, vinaka,' (good, good.) Another was seen eating the last of the flesh from the thigh-bone. This was witnessed by several of the officers and men, who all testify to the same facts.

"Previous to this occurrence, no one in the squadron could say that he had been an eye-witness to cannibalism, though few doubted its practice, but the above transaction placed it beyond all doubt, and we have now the very skull which was bought from those who were picking and eating it, among our collections." (Wilkes 1845, III:248)

### *Race and science*

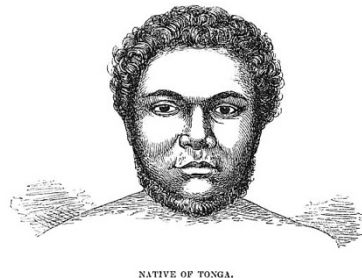
The above quotes demonstrate how the discourse on cannibalism was mixed with pre-racist and pre-evolutionist theories. They also show that those reflections were connected with scientific disciplines. As Douglas put it:

"... there was an emphatic shift in western European discourses on the natural history of 'man' towards the end of the eighteenth century. At about this time the concept of 'race' began to shed its venerable, if by no mean undisputed, connotations of 'variety' within the divinely ordained singularity and the unity of humankind, and to congeal into its grim modernist dogma of permanent, hereditary, possibly originary physical differences between human groups." (Douglas 1999:65)

In consequence, in 1838-40, the Western scientific community considered that one of the best ways to learn more about Non-Western people was through physical anthropology. Physical human features, including stature, skull form and skin colour, were carefully observed. Both in France and America, phrenology was in the vanguard of natural sciences and both Wilkes and d'Urville referred to it. D'Urville travelled with a

famous French phrenologist, Pierre Dumoutier, and Charles Pickering, the naturalist of the Wilkes expedition, was close to Samuel George Morton, a prominent American anthropologist (Joyce 2001). This approach justified the collecting of skulls. For phrenology purposes, Veidovi's skull was thus preserved after his death as well as the cannibal victim's skull whose parts were eaten in front of the *Peacock's* officers.

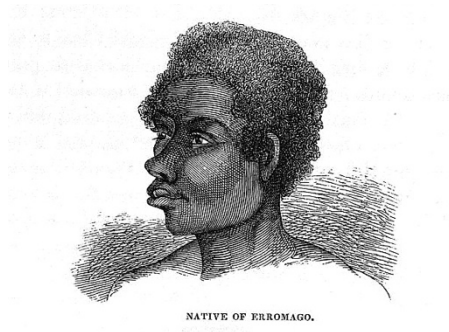
At that time, physical anthropology, as well as other sciences, had already concluded that human races could be sequenced according to skills and intellectual capacities, which paralleled skin colour shades, from darker to whiter. Other features were taken into account, such as hair texture or the facial angle formed by the nose and forehead. All those criteria helped to classify people within types, from the "negro type" to the "European type." Those classifications, along with underlying racist prejudices, obviously appeared in d'Urville and Wilkes accounts, as well as in their illustrations. While light skinned people were mostly depicted as beautiful and clever — according to Western criteria and stylistic conventions — dark skinned people were often caricatured. This is evident in Oceania where the difference between Polynesians and Melanesians was emphasized by those means.<sup>26</sup>



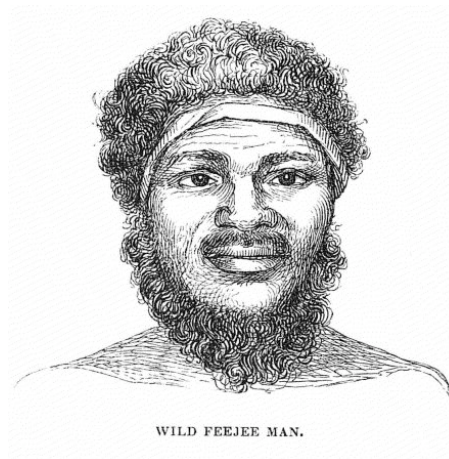
4.85— "Native of Tonga" by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:26)

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<sup>26</sup> See also the chapter by Douglas in the volume edited by Thomas and Losche (1999)



4.86— “Native of Erromango” by J. Drayton (Wilkes 1845, III:27)



4.87— “Wild Feejee Man” by A.T. Agate (Wilkes 1845, III:308)

Fijians tended to be classified as in-between. Miscegenation with Tongans and geographical location partially explain why. However, what mostly disturbed the explorers was the high level of Fijian skills and arts, which they could hardly relate to dark skin and cannibalism. Scientists hoped for a better understanding of how the Pacific islands were populated. Aside from physical observations, their data was mostly based on linguistics. Again, both the d’Urville and Wilkes expeditions had a specialist in this field: d’Urville himself and Horatio Hale. Interestingly, though their sources were similar, d’Urville and Hale came to different conclusions. The French captain believed that Pacific people came from east to west and that the Polynesians, lighter skinned and more advanced, he thought, were stopped in their progression in Fiji where they met a darker, less advanced race — “the Papuan race” for d’Urville. On the contrary, Horatio Hale understood that the Pacific was populated from west to east and that what we now

call Austronesian-speaking people stopped in Fiji before they spread from this area to Polynesia (Hale 1846).

Obviously, the presumed superiority of the Polynesian race induced d'Urville's mistake. Hale was beyond question a good linguist who provided remarkably accurate glossaries of Western Polynesian languages, including Fijian. However, Joyce's argument about early American anthropological models has to be taken into account too. Joyce demonstrates how the reference to Native Americans on one hand and to African-Americans on the other shaped the U.S. explorers' approach to Pacific islanders. At that time in the United States, American Indians were regarded as aggressive and troublesome, whereas African-Americans were considered docile (Joyce 2001). This was before the abolition of slavery in the U.S. (1865) and at the beginning of the conquest of territories in the Far West. It follows that the comparison between American Indians and Polynesians may have disfavoured the latter. The progress of the Indian ethnography in the United States may have influenced the Americans' approach of other non-Western peoples, including in term of collecting strategies and selecting criteria. In France, the inferior race was still officially the Negro, before the abolition of slavery in 1848. This was not in favour of Fijians, whose cannibalism already spoiled their relations with Europeans.

Of course, these positions produced a few exceptions. Among his fellows, Charles Pickering was such an exception. Remarkably objective and thorough, he questioned the pre-existing vision and notion of races, including the presumed superiority of Whites, and he drew attention to the Western tendency to caricaturize others. His revolutionary *Races of Man* (1854) contradicted both polygenists' theories and the *Bible*, five years before Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

However, all were not as open-minded and, as Wilkes stated, Fijians tended to be considered a lost cause, whose only hope of salvation was contact with Westerners, including missionaries:

"Although... the natives of Feejee have made considerable progress in several of the useful arts, they are, in many respects, the most barbarous and savage race now existing upon the globe. The intercourse they have had with white men has produced some effect on their political condition, but does not appear to have had the least influence in mitigating the barbarous ferocity of their character. In this group, therefore, may be seen the savage in his state of nature; and a comparison of his character with that of the natives of the groups in which the gospel has been profitably preached, will enable our readers to form a better estimate of the value of missionary labours, than can well be acquired in any other manner." (Wilkes 1845, III: 77)

# Chapter 5

## Missionaries (1830-1854)

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The missionary is the last type of Western exchange partner this thesis will consider. Even though they were contemporary with many of those mentioned previously, the missionary belongs to a quite different category. In particular, while explorers, surveyors, traders and beachcombers mostly dealt with Fijians as they found them — although they were sometimes shocked by their customs — a primary goal of missionaries was to transform their exchange partners and the cultural features they judged inappropriate (Thornley 2005:149). Another key difference is the scarcity of early missionary collections in museums. This chapter investigates these two patterns, aiming to explain how missionaries impacted on Fiji-West exchanges, as well as on the colonial and cultural future of the archipelago and on its representation in museums.

### Preliminary remarks

#### A brief history of Christian missions in Fiji, until 1854

##### *First contacts*

As discussed in the previous chapters, decades before the arrival in Fiji of the first Christian missionaries, Fijians had become acquainted with the European religion through European and Tongan visitors. The first missionaries who actually settled in Fiji were Pacific islanders connected with the London Missionary Society (LMS). Their leader was a Fijian of Tongan descent, Isereli Takai, who had worked in Tonga with Reverend Lawry in 1822-23, and travelled on board the *Calder* with Peter Dillon in 1823-24. In 1830, John Williams (in Tonga), assigned three Tahitian teachers, Arue, Hatai and Jacaro, to accompany Takai to Lakeba. There it was hoped that Takai would start a new mission; but after two years of trying, Takai retreated to Oneata where he had some connections. On that island, in spite of the continuously antagonist attitude of Roko Malani (Tui Nayau), he began to make some converts (Thornley 1992:92-93; Young 1982:43-44).

Ono-i-Lau also counted a few early Christians, perhaps due to Takai's visit to Ono in the mid-1820s and most certainly linked to Ono's resolute independence *vis-à-vis* the



sovereign power of Lakeba (Young 1982:42-43). Takai and the Tahitian teachers have fallen in quasi-oblivion today. This is partly because they identified themselves with their successors, Wesleyan missionaries<sup>1</sup> (Henderson 1831a:43); and perhaps also because these newcomers barely acknowledged them (Schütz 1977:59).

### *Wesleyan missions*

The Wesleyans William Cross and David Cargill arrived at Lakeba in October 1835. Like their Tahitian predecessors, they first settled on Lakeba, the main island of the Lau group, but they were better prepared than their predecessors. In Tonga, they had achieved a certain acquaintance with Fiji via Fijian residents there and through Tongans who had travelled to Fiji. Crucially, they had begun to learn the language in Tonga (Henderson 1931a:72, 79; Schütz 1977:60-61, 64; Calvert 2003:6).

Their story has been summarized by several authors including James Calvert, who published the first account in 1858 (Calvert 2003 here). In 1838, John Hunt, Thomas Jaggar and James Calvert joined Cross and Cargill on Lakeba with their families, and Fiji became a separate missionary district from Tonga (Calvert 2003:27). In 1839, having received approval from several chiefs, the missionaries established bases in several other places. While Calvert remained on Lakeba, Cargill and Jaggar went to Rewa. Richard Lyth and John Hunt went to Somosomo and Cross went to Viwa, within sight of Bau. From then on, their number steadily increased, reinforced by the arrival of Thomas Williams and other missionaries, as well as Tongan teachers.

Lakeba, the starting point, was tributary to Bau, but it benefited from a certain autonomy due to its strategic position and that of its Lauan dependencies between the most powerful chiefdoms of Tonga and Fiji. In 1839, the Tongans resident in Tubou, the chiefly village of Lakeba, erected a chapel (Calvert 2003:91). In 1842, another chapel was inaugurated at Oneata. There, some key conversions happened with Tui Nayau's agreement (*Ibid.*:93-94). In 1844, Toki Soroaqali died. He was Tui Nayau's brother and one of the most powerful opponents to the *Lotu*, the name given to Christian religion. Two years later, Wetasau, a high ranking chief from Lakeba, converted (*Ibid.*:129). After many hesitations, Tui Nayau made a public profession of Christianity on 19th October

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<sup>1</sup> 'Wesleyans' is an alternative name for Methodists, who followed the precepts of John Wesley, a British evangelist of the 18th century. For more information on the history of Methodism/Wesleyanism and the Fiji mission see Henderson (1831a:44).



1849 — almost five years before Cakobau (*Ibid.*:136). By 1854, what the Wesleyans called the “Lakeba Circuit” was promoted as an exemplary success.

The Circuit of Ono-i-Lau has already been mentioned. Calvert described it as another example of Wesleyan early success in Fiji. However, it seems that Ono’s progressive conversion was relatively self-induced, i.e. largely independent of direct missionary work. It seems that, in that southern part of Lau, the Christians suffered particularly from Lakeban persecution. (Calvert 2003:51-90)

Somosomo was the chiefly village of Taveuni and the residence of the paramount chief of Cakaudrove, Tui Cakau. It was also one of the greatest chiefdoms of Fiji at that time, alternately ally or enemy to Bau. During the period under consideration, the effective power of Yavala (Tui Cakau) — whom the Whites called the “old King” of Somosomo — progressively decreased in favour of his son, Tui’ila’ila. Officially, Tui’ila’ila was paramount chief only briefly, from 1853 to 1854; but his influence on the chiefdom’s management was great. Having visited Lakeba, Tui Cakau and his son requested a missionary for Somosomo. It seems that rivalry between Tui Cakau and Tui Nayau, as well as an interest in Western goods, motivated that demand. Lyth and Hunt officially founded the mission station at Somosomo in 1839. Yet, although many eminent missionaries were based there, the mission failed. Somosomo was abandoned by the Wesleyans in 1847 (Calvert 2003:32-50).

Rewa, on the southeast coast of Vitilevu, was another powerful chiefdom in eastern Fiji. Geographically speaking, Calvert described it as the “heart of Fiji.” This location explains why the printing establishment of the mission was transferred from Lakeba to Rewa in 1849 (Calvert 2003:151). Tui Dreketi, paramount chief of Rewa, was always courteous with the missionaries, yet they made little progress at Rewa before 1854. Rewa was engaged in a protracted war with Bau (see Sahlins, 2004, for a full discussion) and driven by inner dissensions.

In 1847, two new stations were founded on Vanualevu, one at Bua, on the western coast, and one at Nadi, on the south-western coast. They both achieved limited success until 1854. A Fijian Christian teacher had been at Bua since 1843, but Tui Bua’s opposition meant he made few conversions. Tui Bua died in 1847, shortly before Thomas Williams arrived there. His successor as Tui Bua converted in August 1855. During the period under consideration, one of the most significant accomplishments at

Bua was the building of a chapel in Tiliva, described as one of the most beautiful Christian edifices of the area (Calvert 2003: 359-396).



5.1— “Chapel, Mission-House, and School, Bua” (Calvert 2003: frontispiece)

The Wesleyans’ main target remained Bau, and its leaders — Tanoa and Cakobau. Bau was highly influential in the central, northern and eastern parts of the archipelago and it was hoped that the conversion of Bau’s leading chiefs would facilitate the progress of Christianity. However, until 1853 Cakobau prevented the Christians from establishing a mission at Bau itself. Instead, Viwa, close by, became a point of entry (Calvert 2003:283).

The mission station at Viwa was founded in 1839 by William Cross. Its area of activity embraced the eastern coast of Vitilevu as well as Ovalau until 1853. That part of Fiji was an important platform of commercial transactions, and therefore a strategic target for the missionaries. During the period under discussion, the Viwa circuit counted two significant conversions before that of Cakobau. Vatea, a niece of Tanoa and a spouse of Namosimalua professed Christianity in 1844 (Calvert 2003:276-277). The following year, Verani, nephew of Tui Viwa and close friend of Cakobau, also converted (Calvert 2003:263ff; Wallis 1851:65-66). In 1850, Gavidu, chief of the Lakasau people — the Vunivalu of Bau’s fishermen — died (Calvert 2003:304). Two years later the Vunivalu himself, Tanoa Visawaqa, passed away (*Ibid.*:321). In this way two active opponents of Christianity disappeared. In the face of many difficulties and conflicting interests, including pressure from King George of Tonga, Cakobau converted to Christianity on the 30th April 1854 (Calvert 2003:335).

### *Catholic missions*

Shortly after the Wesleyans arrived at Lakeba in 1835, the Catholics showed interest in the area. In the central Pacific, the Catholic Church was represented by the Marist Society (*Société de Marie*), based in Lyon (France). H. Soubeyran (n.d.) summarized the story of Marist missionaries in Fiji in English.<sup>2</sup> Calvert and his fellow Wesleyans also mentioned them, but antagonistically as “Papists,” whom they considered were encroaching on their territory.

In 1842, Bishop Pompallier stopped at Lakeba on his way back to New Zealand from Wallis and Uvea, where the Marist Society had established a mission. He tried to start a mission in Lau but was unsuccessful. This was partly due to the hostile attitude of the Wesleyans (see for example Henderson 1931a:91-92, and Girard 2009, VII:72-73), but also because the inhabitants of Lakeba judged they had enough missionaries among them already. In 1844, a new attempt was made. The Fathers Bréhéret and Roulleaux anchored at Lakeba on the 9th of August; but they were refused authority to stay. Instead, they reached Namuka, where they remained for two months. After that delay, they were received at Lakeba and Tui Nayau authorised them to settle. A narrative of their arrival is kept by the Catholic Church of Fiji (NH 5/4/33/4).

In 1851, Monseigneur Bataillon — Pompallier’s successor<sup>3</sup> — visited his priests in Lakeba and brought some reinforcement. Nevertheless, the Catholics remained largely unsuccessful in Lau in contrast to their Methodist rivals. The same year, Bréhéret tried to start a mission on Taveuni where the Methodists had failed. Bataillon went on to Bau, but Cakobau refused at that time to allow a Christian mission on the island. Levuka, on Ovalau, was chosen instead. This was a crucial decision since the first and greatest successes of the Catholic Church in Fiji occurred there, from 1852 onwards (Calvert 2003:319). In 1852, a Catholic Station was also founded at Rewa, while the Methodists were absent. However, the spread of Catholicism in Fiji remained rather marginal until 1854, whereas the Methodists established missions in key chiefdoms.

For further detail see the book of Joseph Félix Blanc, in two volumes (1926).

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<sup>2</sup> Most Catholic archives for the period under consideration are in French.

<sup>3</sup> Pompallier was the first Vicar Apostolic in Oceania, in 1836. In 1843, he could not manage all islands any more, including Wallis (Uvea) and Futuna in Western Polynesia. Rome therefore divided the area in two districts. Pierre Bataillon was appointed at the head of the district of Central Oceania. (for detail, see Essertel 2011c)

## Missionary collections and archives (1835-1854)

In the museums visited for the purpose of this thesis, missionary collections are remarkably scarce. The biggest ensemble was encountered at the Fiji Museum (FM). Several missionaries are represented there, but few of them worked in Fiji before 1854. However, some artefacts from this period (discussed below) are connected to R. B. Lyth and Thomas Williams.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from those, eight items, now at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (CUMAA), are related to Joseph Waterhouse (1932.680-687). Unfortunately, Waterhouse only arrived in Fiji in 1853. At CUMAA, two others are linked with Lyth. Both of them are currently displayed in the *Chiefs and Governors* exhibition (Herle & Carreau: fig.2.20 & 4.12). One wig (*ulumate*) is also kept at the Musée des Confluences (MdC D979-3-1187) in Lyon (Essertel 2011a:65, fig.21). It is associated with Monseigneur Pompallier who acquired it at Lakeba, probably in 1842. This artefact will be discussed later in this chapter.

In Lyon, as well as in the British Museum (BM), other missionary collections exist. Yet, most of these are undocumented. Especially, the dates and circumstances of their acquisition are usually unknown. Such collections are connected with head offices of missionaries societies. Some of them had their own museum. This is the case, for instance, of the Catholic congregations of Picpus and Marie, who supplied *Le Musée de la Propagation de la Foi* in Lyon.<sup>5</sup> Zerbini explained how such a museum responded to a double concern of missionary societies. First, they were tools for missionary activities, the understanding of non-Christian people being a central preoccupation of Christian envoys. Secondly, they provided missionaries with a public image in Europe. They illustrated the nature of paganism and thereby emphasised the great labour required to overcome it (Zerbini 2011:13).

By the twentieth century, in Europe, many missionary societies were experiencing a loss of impetus, which had negative implications for their museums and collections, which were costly to maintain. At the same time, the concern for the preservation of artefacts from all parts of the world increased with what Riegl called *Der*

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Lyth worked in Fiji until 1854 and Thomas Williams until 1853.

<sup>5</sup> Both the museum and the related association bore the same name, that of *Propagation de la Foi*.

*moderne Denkmalkultus* (1903).<sup>6</sup> It became the main preoccupation of pluri-disciplinary museums such as the BM or the Museum of Natural History in Lyon.<sup>7</sup> Progressively, missionary collections found their way to such institutions, and from there to their current places of keeping. For instance, the LMS deposited collections from the South Seas at the BM in 1890. These were definitively accessioned in 1911 (Hooper 2008:122). To track such pieces prior to their date of transfer into larger museums is often difficult. Their number is considerable and, although a few pieces are ancient and well-identified (Brizon 2011:52), most of them do not relate with certainty to this thesis' period of focus. Consequently, most of that work still has to be done.

By chance, the scarcity of documentation of missionary collections is balanced by abundant archives, from the period under consideration and beyond. Although few missionary documents are directly concerned with artefacts now in museums, many illuminate museum collections by describing their circumstances of acquisition and their route to Europe. They mostly consist in the journals, correspondence and paperwork of missionaries (e.g. financial accounts, lists of converts, etc.).

These archives are kept in several places, in and outside of Fiji. Most of the Methodist journals are now housed in the Mitchell Library in Sydney (Australia). Many archival documents related to the work of the Methodist church in Fiji have, however, been deposited at the National Archives of Fiji in Suva. This is the case for all the early paperwork from Methodist circuits. Catholic archives in Fiji are mainly stored at Nicolas House (Suva). It is possible that the Marist brothers, still active, keep separate archives (personal communication, Lusiana Kuriuci, Nicolas House, 2010). The head offices of missionary institutions also hold some documents. Some archives exist in London and Lyon, and some are kept at the Vatican. Unfortunately, these latter places have not been visited during this research.

Nevertheless, the consulted archives and known collections can inform some unexamined ensembles. For example, among the Catholic Archives of Fiji, a folder is dedicated to a large exhibition held in Rome in 1924 (n°12/3/18). It mostly consists in lists of items sent to Rome by each Catholic congregation of Fiji. They comprise natural history specimens (i.e. shells, minerals, plants) as well as artefacts. The latter category

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<sup>6</sup> Riegl's expression was translated in English as "the modern cult of monuments." This thesis refers to the French version (Riegl 1984).

<sup>7</sup> The *Musée des Confluences* inherited collections from the *Musée d'Histoire Naturelle* of Lyon, where the missionary collections had been deposited (see Lolom 2011:10-11)

include modern articles, some of which were made by the members of Fijian parishes, such as baskets and fans made by the Catholics of Suva (n°12/3/18/xxii). However, a number of them are characterized as ancient, and related to practices obsolete in 1924 such as warrior, cannibal and/or ritual activities. For instance, some clubs are said to have been used during ceremonies of the “*Kai Nakau Vadra*”, and one “staff” was presumed to belong to a “high chief of the past” (n°12/3/18/xvi). Similarly, the Namosi parish sent a cooking pot from Nainaga, which was said to be around one hundred years old and to have served during pagan ceremonies of the past (n°12/3/18/xiii). The list n°12/3/18/xi includes a “very old” paddle, and n°vii is “a concave dish, 3 feet long, having served for human flesh, over one hundred years of existence.” Unfortunately, it is not specified whether these items had been acquired in the 1920s by Catholic congregations, or whether they had been in their hands for some time.

As with many written sources considered in this thesis, missionary archives, including missionary journals, are not neutral documents. Schütz explained that missionary journals consisted in potentially publishable records. They responded to specific criteria and purposes, comparable with those of missionary museums (Schütz 1977:8). By chance, the archives themselves shed light on such criteria. Thus, before 1842, the Catholic Church distributed a document in which was listed what was expected of missionaries regarding the observation and knowledge of non-Christian peoples (Marist archives, Rome, OC 418.1).<sup>8</sup> Such directives served to make missionaries amongst the earliest ethnographer and linguists of Fiji.

## Artefacts obtained by missionaries

The Lyth collection now at the FM comprises less than fifty artefacts. However, it is the biggest set of missionary items examined during this work. The FM received most of them in February 1958 (numbered 58.01-58.39). They were “presented by Philip Lyth, Esq. Principal — Nottinghamshire from Institute Brackenhurst — Southwell — Notts. England” (FM’s register book 1940-77). The collection includes a number of body ornaments (e.g. one *liku* skirt, one necklet, a few armlets, *isala* turbans and combs). It also counts several *masi* cloths and mats (*ibe*), and some pieces of basketry such as baskets and fans. A few fishing implements and tools (e.g. adze, tattooing comb, cordage)

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<sup>8</sup> That document has been examined and commented by Essertel (2008).

complete the set. The previous chapters have shown that such articles are quite common in early collections from Fiji. Several of them were exchangeable items *par excellence* (e.g. mats, *masi*). Thus, although this ensemble is only a sample of what Lyth might have obtained in Fiji, it tends to confirm which types of artefacts were alienable and therefore accessible to Westerners before 1854.

Several types artefact correspond with those previously observed in collections from the 1830s and 1840s. For instance, the baskets 58.20 and 58.04 have equivalents in the Wilkes collection (e.g. SI E3394, E3396, E3239, E3244, E3776, E4409). The combs (58.10-58.13) are typical *iseru sasa* of Tongan fashion. They consist in natural *sasa* and darkened coconut fibres, comparable with E3560, E3562 in NMNH (SI). The specimens 58.10 and 58.13 are decorated with tiny glass beads of Western origin, already discussed in chapter 3. Similarly, the kinds and provenances of *masi* cloths are analogous to those usually present in early collections and in Fiji-West transactions. (See Clunie 2003a: fig. 42 & 45; fig.80-81, fig.217, 221, 222, 227 & 229).

The skirt 58.01 is more remarkable. *Likutaria* like this one are rare in museum collections from the period under consideration. Most of the *liku* which survived from that time are made of *vau* (inner bark of the *Hibiscus*), with occasional addition of barkcloth. Others are in *waloa* creeper. *Taria* swamp sedges are exceptional. Here, they are dangling from a quite large waistband of woven fibres and arranged into two shades and lengths, some dark and shorter, the others natural in colour and longer. In a recent contribution, Jacobs has reminded us that missionaries contributed to the obsolescence of *liku* in favour of European-like dresses judged more appropriate (Jacobs 2013:71).

Even more striking is the presence of one *tabua* (FM 58.24), a rare item in early collections (see previous chapters). There are also four *saulaca* or sail needles (FM 58.07). These are made of human bones and therefore associated with the pre-Christian practice of cannibalism. Three dolls are surprising too. They are without equivalent in other collections investigated (58.16-58.18). Surprisingly, there are no weapons in the Lyth collection at the FM. Elsewhere, clubs and spears represent a large proportion of Fijian early collections, as well as of missionary collections. For example, the *Musée de la Propagation de la Foi* includes a significant percentage of weapons from Oceania (Zerbini 2011:14, fig.1).



Here, the absence of weapons may perhaps be attributed to Lyth's personality. His journals show little interest in war-related aspects of Fijian culture, while they are rather thorough about the rest (Lyth 1839-56). In contrast, the eight items kept in Cambridge and associated with Waterhouse are all clubs (CUMAA 1923.680-682). The previous chapters have demonstrated that weapons were typical alienable items in Fiji, from the late eighteenth century until 1854.<sup>9</sup>



5.2— FM, 58.16



5.3— FM, 58.17



5.4— FM, 58.18

The dolls, as well as the mass of more common artefacts, can be related to the above-mentioned endeavour of comprehension of Fijian society. Lyth was, by reputation, a keen observer. These dolls wear three different kind of Fijian dresses. From Derrick's description, Larsson indicated that one is dressed as a "Fijian girl" (58.18). She wears a *liku* skirt and a few Fijian-like jewels. The second is dressed with a typically Fijian piece of dark *masi*, underneath which a small mat is visible (58.16). According to Derrick it was the outfit of women of rank, but the FM's catalogue card reads: "figurine or doll, articulated limbs, black tapa cloth, dressed as a chief." The last one (58.17) is wrapped in a *gatu*-like *masi*, i.e. a thick barkcloth with rubbed designs of Western Polynesian origin. Derrick suggested she was dressed "as a Fijian chief" (Larsson 1960:104). The catalogue card indicates: "dressed as a lady of high rank." At the same time, these dolls seem illustrative of changes within Fijian material culture.

<sup>9</sup> Lyth's list of curiosities (Lyth n.d.) includes a few weapons, but these have not been localised to date. Also, some clubs remain in the possession of members of the Lyth family, but whether these were acquired by Lyth or members of the Waterhouse family (there was intermarriage) is unclear (personal communication, Steven Hooper, 28th August 2013).

They are indeed reminiscent of European toys. The presence of missionary children in early congregations, as well as that of missionary schools for Fijian children, might explain the making of such hybrid objects. Larsson confirmed this by explaining that European dolls were in demand in Fiji at the end of the 1840s (*Ibid.*:105).

Today, *saulaca* needles remain evocative of one of the features of Fijian culture that was condemned by missionaries and more generally by Europeans, cannibalism (see previous chapters). It has been explained before that one prominent task of missionary collections and writings was to portray the depraved state of non-Christian people, thereby justifying missionary activity. The first lines of Calvert's volume exemplify this well. They depict Fijians in a dark way, as if to defend the presence of missionaries in the archipelago (Calvert 2003:1). Weir insisted on Calvert's exacerbated tendency to emphasize thrilling differences between Christian and non-Christian peoples, as well as on a rather sensational tone. This was perhaps due to the intended audience of his book. It nonetheless contrasts with Williams' volume, published at the same time as Calvert's, and with Lyth's unpublished journals. Williams and Lyth both appear to be more nuanced observers (Weir 2008). Henceforth, being part of Lyth's collection, these *saulaca* could be seen as merely informative artefacts. Yet, they must also be regarded as an illustration of the effects of Christianity on Fijians. They were "given to R.B.L. by John Turaga, a Levuka sailor of Lakeba, in the late 1840s" (Clunie 2003a:fig.197-200). The first name here provided indicates that Lyth's exchange partner was a Christian convert. The period indicated by Clunie suggests a quite long acquaintance between Fijians and missionaries, as well as of considerable progress of the Christian faith on Lakeba already. The alienation to a missionary of such items, of significance in old Fijian beliefs, cannot be random. These sail needles were representative of John Turaga's profession and group, and especially of their pre-Christian features since the Levuka people, previous inhabitants of Bau, were *kai wai* — sea people — expert sailors and specialist fishermen, and by implication providers of human sacrifices and cannibal victims (*bokola*). Symbolically, the sacrifice made was that of paganism. At least, it is an explanation missionaries would have happily received, and provided. A similar reasoning can certainly apply to the flesh fork (*iculanibokola*), now at the CUMAA, "which retains its association with its previous owner and a specific village" (Herle & Carreau:63-64, fig.4.12).

Among the other items in Lyth's 1958 collection at the FM, many can be qualified as useful artefacts. Some were probably of daily use in the islands (e.g. baskets, fans). European missionaries needed local items to function on a daily basis in Fiji. Thomas Williams travelled the circuit of which he had charge with his own "mat and mosquito curtain" (Calvert 2003:371). Such missionary property, of Fijian origin, might have survived into museum collections. Beyond their testimonial value as to how Fijians lived, they inform us about the relations between European missionaries and Fijian islanders. Missionaries were inserted in the local networks of making and circulation of Fijian products. It is likely that they did not produce their own mats and *masi*, and their financial accounts suggest they paid for them with Western goods (below). From a Fijian point of view, their practical value for missionaries made them potential gifts and exchange items.

Missionary writings and collections shed light on the material aspects of the relationships between Fijians and European churchmen. What missionaries needed the most in the islands were food and shelter, for themselves and for their families. Subsistence was a central concern. As long as their relations with their hosts were good, it seems they received both in abundance. On their arrival in a new place, such gifts may be interpreted as acts of diplomacy, comparable to the reception of other foreigners (see previous chapters). *A posteriori*, and especially once the number of Christians had grown significant, it seems that to provide for missionaries became a way to show deference and respect to the Christian envoys and therefore to the Christian God.

On several occasion David Cargill described the way Fijians welcomed and accommodated him. On his arrival at Oneata, in October 1838, he explained:

"On the beach we were met by the Tahitian teachers and many of the Christians. They conducted us immediately to that part of the settlement where our chapel and the houses of the teachers stand. To our surprise we found 10 or 12 baskets of baked hogs, yams, bananas ... placed before the door of one of the teachers houses. This, said one of the teachers is for the crew of your canoe, and without waiting for a reply, led M<sup>rs</sup> C, the children and myself away into a small [ ] where a plentiful repast was prepared for us. A table was covered with a white cloth, plates were laid on it, and a sailor's knife with a rusty fork. A baked hog, a fowl and abundance of yams were placed before us. In the earnestness of their love they would not allow us to rise from our seats to procure our own knives, but entreated us to excuse their poverty and endeavour to make one knife and fork do for us all. While expressing our gratitude for our safe arrival and the people's kindness, one of the teachers said, Misa Kakile, this food has been provided by me: it is an expression of my love to you and Misi Kakile and your daughters: another teacher will provide similar things tomorrow — a third at noon and so on, and before we could express our thankfulness, he ran off to another part of the house, and immediately

returned with two mats and a piece of native cloth and presented them to us. Whilst thus employed a number of women came to shake hands with M<sup>rs</sup> C and the girls, bringing with them several earthen pots filled with cooked fish and yams. We were astonished and delighted at their kindness: what a contrast between these young converts to Christianity and the heathen king of Mothe! I entreated him to sell us food, but he would not, but these people have impoverished themselves to show kindness to us.” (Schütz 1977:121-122)

A few months later, in April 1839, he visited Ono:

“We have been informed that the chiefs hearing of our intention to visit them, have built a house for our reception, and have put a taboo on the pigs and fowls, that we may have abundance of food to eat. The natives are in general hospitable to strangers and generally manifest their love by preparing a feast, or giving a present.” (Schütz 1977:126)

These two examples confirm Sahlins’ theory according to which food has often “too much social value... to have exchange value” (1972:218). But Sahlins added that, if “food does not move against money or other stuff within the community... yet it may be so exchanged out outside these social contexts...” (*Ibid.*:219). And in fact, the mention of the “King of Mothe” (Ramasi) here suggests that, since it was the object of missionary desire and need, food was a highly valued commodity within and beyond the Christian community. Its degree of exchangeability, in various circumstances, reflected the nature of missionaries’ relations with Fijians.

Thus, Williams reported that in 1843 on Lakeba:

“Cakobou paid us a visit, lunched in my house, looked over our premises and, after a stay of about two hours, returned to the seaside. He says the reports respecting his coming to molest the Christians are false ... In the afternoon he sent us up a baked pig, taro and some nuts.” (Henderson 1931a:163)

A few days later, Cakobau, who was visiting Tui Nayau at Lakeba to obtain valuables, made the missionaries “a present of about 400 large yams weighing from about 20 to nearly 70 pounds each” (*Ibid.*:167). Such presents, it seems, aimed to prove Cakobau’s good faith. They can also be regarded as a typical act of chiefly generosity and a diplomatic gesture, though whether the yams and pigs were supplied by Lakebans is unclear (see chapter 1).

In addition to food, building materials were also needed by the missionaries. They were necessary for the construction of houses, chapels and churches, symbols of Christian progress in the islands. Of course, the islanders’ labour was also necessary, and it too was provided by missionaries’ supporters — temporary or permanent ones.

Missionary accounts suggest that wages for local servants and labour were significant expenses. In July 1838, Cargill described the building of a new chapel on Lakeba:

“This forenoon our people under the direction of Uiliami Lajike began to build a new chapel. We held divine service at the erecting of the posts which are to support the building. The scene was very interesting and I trust profitable to the souls of many. A large congregation was present, and many tears of joy were shed. The Feejeeans and the Tonguese seem to be desirous of outstripping one another in this labour of love. All have engaged in the undertaking with great alacrity and goodwill. Several heathens have volunteered their services in rearing this Christian temple. Lua — the quondam persecutor of the Christians — has very kindly presented us with several large skeins of cynet, and has tendered his assistance in the preparation of the various materials for the house of prayer, Soroangkali — the king's brother has presented the Chief of the Christian party with a large roll of cynet. The chapel when finished will probably hold between 500 & 600 persons.” (Schütz 1977:112-113)

Knowing the missionaries' needs, some things became designated payments or compensation to them. For example, when Tui'ila'ila wanted some Western goods he promised Williams pigs, sennit and timber (Henderson 1931a:185-86). More surprisingly perhaps, it seems that missionaries also developed commercial transactions with Christian converts. One of their main tasks in Fiji was to translate the Scriptures into Fijian, and to print bibles and prayer books. These they sold to the Christian converts. On Oneata in 1838, Cargill said “they purchased them with fowls, native cloth &c.” (Schütz 1977:122). Ten years later, on Ono, Hazlewood reported selling copies of the New Testament: “They paid for them well in native products, chiefly in sennit, which is very needful for Mission purposes in Fiji” (Calvert 2003:80). Interestingly, all the above-mentioned articles were traditional *iyau*, notably presented as tribute by Lauan chiefdoms. For instance, the tribute of Lakeba to Bau in January 1843 comprised:

“An immense new canoe, 15 large packages of native cloth (some marked) and a great quantity of mosquito screens (about 50), 7 large balls of cynet, 10 whales' teeth of from 1½ lb. to 4 lb. weight and the favourite daughter of the King, Randi Tangethe, who has lately embraced Christianity.” (Henderson 1931a:145)

If we extrapolate, it seems that the locals paid tribute to the Christian *talatala*. They remunerated them for the books, but also for their work as churchmen, school masters and doctors, and as representatives of a powerful god with whom it was desirable to establish and maintain good relations. These presentations could also be considered sacrifices. Learning to read was a desire frequently expressed by Fijians, notably chiefly ones. It was of one of Tui Nayau's first interests with the missionaries

(Schütz 1977:64). The practice of medicine also was an important aspect of missionary work. As Henderson put it:

“The practice of medicine was by this time an important part of the work of Methodist missionaries, because it was regarded as a valuable auxiliary to the progress of the Christian religion. There is no doubt whatever that it was so. For every cure effected by the missionaries Jehovah got the credit. That was the native way of thinking. To them the cause of illness was supernatural not natural, and it had to be removed by supernatural agencies whatever the means employed.” (Henderson 1931a:45 n.36)

Henderson wrote a whole chapter on that question in his commented version of *Fiji and the Fijians* (Henderson 1931b:126ff.). But Calvert, in his time, already acknowledged the advantages and necessity of European medicine in Fiji, knowing that it was a significant means to achieve success (2003:115, 284). Many Fijians converted in hope of benefiting from European treatments (Henderson 1931a:94 n.56). For example, Mary Wallis explained how one of Cakobau’s daughters became a Christian:

“About a year ago the child was taken sick with an intermittent fever. Thakombau said it would be good for her to go to Vewa, “*lotu*” and receive medical aid from the missionaries... The heathen appear to think that the white man’s God would not heal a worshiper of the heathen god. I cannot learn where they got this idea, but perhaps it is not a bad one, since it brings more people under religious instruction.” (Wallis 1851:77, original emphasis)

Coming back to the question of payments and tributes to missionaries, it is possible that Lyth obtained the *tabua* now at the FM (58.24) via a similar mechanism. This seems especially plausible since Lyth was a trained surgeon, known among Fijians as “*matai ni mate*” — expert in sickness/healing (e.g. Henderson 1931a:96).<sup>10</sup> It has already been explained that *tabua* were highly valuable from a Fijian viewpoint. The next part will explain how they were also important for missionaries in the context of their transactions with Fijians. They probably became a prestigious form of reciprocation for missionary services, including medical ones.

Other artefacts shed light on the involvement of missionaries because they can be associated with specific events. One *masikesa*, or painted barkcloth, now at the FM, was worn by King Tioti Tupou I of Tonga when he visited Fiji in 1853 (FM 58.37; Clunie 2003a:fig.229).

Finally, there is one net and two trolling lures in the Lyth 1958 collection (Clunie 2003a: figs. 41, 36, 38). The net (58.08) was used by women to catch prawns. Like the *matauvatu* adze (58.21), it is a typical *iyaya* or piece of Fijian equipment. Though not

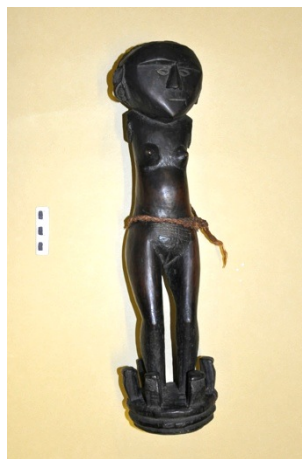
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<sup>10</sup> For a greater insight into the role of Lyth and medicine in Fiji, see the thesis by Laurel M. Heath (1987).

without value, such items distinguished themselves from *iyau* by a smaller exchange value and inappropriateness for major presentations (Hooper 1982:50-51). It appears that Western travellers collected them when they had the opportunity, but they did not seek them specifically. In contrast, Lyth received one of the trolling lures from Tui Nayau at Tubou (Lakeba), on the 25th February 1853:

“On mid morning his majesty sent over his prime minister Tui Tubou with a Tongan fish hook — with wh. to purchase a pig of mine running about the koro (town) — for the magiji (magiti, feast) for his Tongan friends. I told him that in consideration of the great poverty of his majesty I consented to his having the pig.” (Clunie 2003a:32)

The lure illustrated by Clunie is a fine specimen (2003a: fig.36). Clunie explained that such hooks, like Samoan ones, were used to catch fish for chiefs in Fiji. This would have made them precious or even *tabu* items — alienated only in certain circumstances (Godelier 2004:19). Here, it seems as though Tui Nayau used this hook as a type of *tabua*. The Wilkes collection contains a number of them, some outstanding (Tongan specimens: SI E3639-3642, E3677, E3683; and Samoan specimens: SI E9218). They were esteemed articles and powerful gifts in the whole Fiji-Tonga-Samoa area, as later historical exchanges confirm (Herle & Carreau: fig.5.16, p.84). This example underlines, once more, the variation of estimation of value between several exchange partners, including missionaries who lived within and carefully observed Fijian society.



5.5— *Buinikauvadra* FM, 86.65

At least one other item at the FM is attributed to Lyth. It is an anthropomorphic hanger connected with pre-Christian beliefs in Fiji (FM 86.65). This female image has been carefully described by Larsson, who tracked its history in several museums in



England (1960:42-44). An old label on the back of the figure indicates, in Lyth's handwriting, that she represented a "Fijian goddess" named *Buinikauvadra* (the old woman of Kauvadra). Clunie also provided the following description of her, from Lyth's "list of curiosities:"

"A Feejeean idol — a goddess named Bui na Kauvandra — her arms were cut off in a war with gods — she is said to be the grandmother of other deities, hence her name. Such images are not known to be worshipped in Feejee."  
(Clunie 2003a: fig.128)<sup>11</sup>

The existence of that list (Lyth n.d.), combined with the fact that this artefact was "repatriated to Fiji by the Overseas Division of the Methodist Church" (*Ibid.*),<sup>12</sup> confirms that Methodist missionaries collected articles of Fijian manufacture specifically for their head offices in Europe, New Zealand or Australia. In 1848, Hazlewood specifically mentioned in his journal that the natives of Ono provided missionaries with "yams... as their contribution to the work of God; besides some native curiosities to Mr. Lawry,<sup>13</sup> for the bazaar at New Zealand" (Calvert 2003:80). "Bazaars" were held by the missionaries to raise funds for the mission, and especially for a school for the children of missionaries in Auckland.

In the same vein, the Methodist Missionary Society deposited a remarkable bag of Tongan origin in Cambridge in 1957 (CUMAA D.1957.4). This specimen too is attributed to Lyth, apparently acquired by him in the 1840s (Herle & Carreau:17-18, fig.2.20). It is distinctively a *kato mosi kaka*, i.e. a finely woven bag of coconut palm spathe fibres dyed in two colours. Its typical diagonal patterns are highlighted with shell beads, as is usual on such pieces. Bags like this one were reserved to the highest ranking members of Tongan society. Similar specimens exist in early collections, including Cook's (Kaeppeler 2009:195-196) and Wilkes' (SI E5696). The shape of this specimen is unusual and it looks especially old. These two features render it exceptional among others of its kind. This suggests that Lyth was inclined to document various aspects of his Fijian environment, including early connections with Tonga. It also demonstrates that precious artefacts were carefully preserved by missionary societies such as the Methodist one.

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<sup>11</sup> The last comment contrasts strikingly with the beginning of the description, but it was not uncommon among the writings of early Methodist missionaries. Their unwillingness to admit that Fijians may have worshipped images has been discussed by Henderson (Henderson 1931a:67) and Clunie (2003a:112). Larsson devoted a whole chapter to that question (1960:87-97).

<sup>12</sup> In the FM register book, the status indicated is: "On Loan from Methodist Missionary Society London"

<sup>13</sup> Lawry was the General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission in Australia and Polynesia at that time.

Among such “curiosities” a number of artefacts seem related to pre-Christian cults. The *Buinikauvadra* figure is one example, but Clunie also illustrated a few *yaqona* dishes. One such *daveniyaqona* (FM 86.66) was repatriated to Fiji at the same time as the above-mentioned anthropomorphic hook. Unfortunately, this second item is not as well dated as *Buinikauvadra* (Clunie 2003a: fig.130). Nonetheless, Clunie explained the use of such bowls. As with all “indigenous Vitian *yaqona* drinking,” he wrote, it “was fundamentally religious in nature.” Dishes like this one, shallower than usual *yaqona* bowls of Western Polynesian origin (*tanoa*), were used by priests with highly concentrated *yaqona*. They were called *daveniyaqona* or *ibuburau*, and were usually kept in spirit houses (*burekalou*). Some of them are simple plates; some rest on a stand. A few are figurative (Clunie 2003a: figs.130-133).

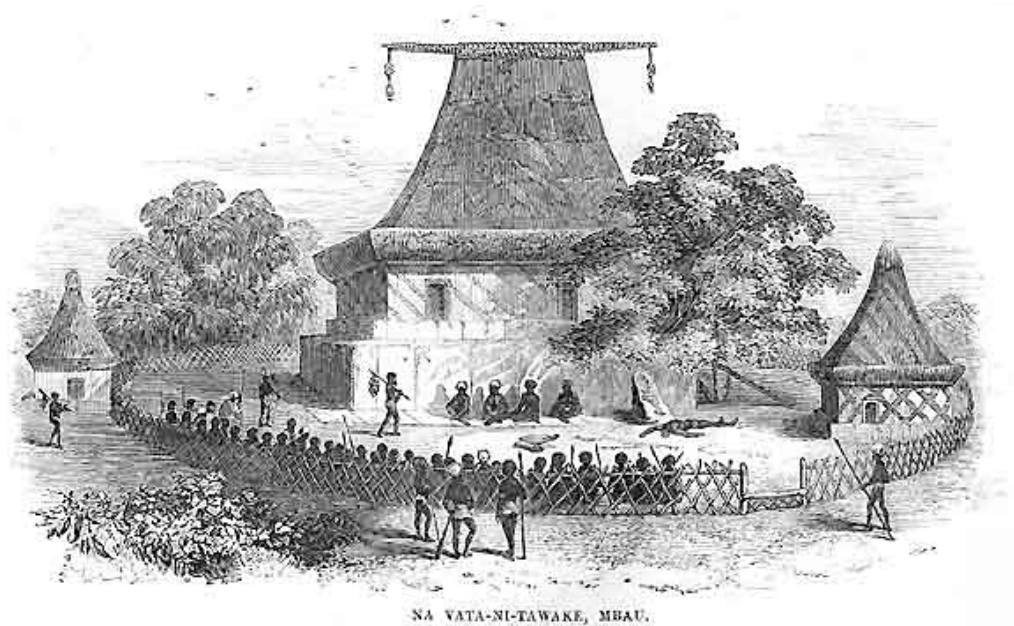
The dish 86.66 has the shape of a human image. It has been explained already that such bowls were rarely accessible to surveyors in the early 1840s (chapter 4). However, they first became available to missionaries around that time. On 25th May 1839 Cargill wrote:

“We visited the chief & several of the people of Ovalau. While in the principal temple of the place, I saw a bowl of singular shape and appearance [unfortunately not specified], and upon inquiry found it to be the bowl from which the priest was in the habit of drinking anggonā [*yaqona*] during his fits of inspiration, & that it was sacrilege for any person but the priest alone to drink out of this sacred instrument. The appearance and use of this utensil excited in me a desire to become its proprietor. I begged it from the chief, but was informed that he could not dispose of it without the sanction of the priest. The priest was therefore sent for, and being informed that he might expect a present, his sanction to give me the bowl was soon obtained.” (Schütz 1977:138)

Clunie suggested that, from then on, a number of *ibuburau* dishes “were collected from spirit houses in eastern Vitilevu or at Bau or Viwa following priestly conversions to Christianity” (2003a:114). Some remained in missionary hands. Others were collected by British travellers, such as Erskine and Worth, who were strong supporters of the missionaries in Fiji at that time (Clunie 2003a: fig.131).

One of the FM’s specimens was acquired by Williams himself, prior to 1854 (82.4). It is a large bowl, made of one solid piece of *vesi* wood. It is carved in the shape of a flying duck, now broken. This dish is probably the same one that Williams observed and depicted on Bau, in front of the Navatanitawake *burekalou* (Clunie 2003a:114). An old label, stuck underneath one wing, reads: “King Thakombau’s drinking bowl. Thomas Williams.” This dish is one of three items at the FM on loan from the National Archives of

Fiji and attributed to Williams. They previously belonged to Elizabeth Hollingshead Lectie, a grand-daughter of Thomas Williams (FM's register book, 1979-82).



5.6— “Na Vata-ni-Tawake, Mbau” (Calvert 2003:230)

N°82.5 in the FM is a model of canoe planking technique. It consists in two planks fitted together with *magimagi*. Clunie illustrated and commented on it (2003a: fig.23). N°82.3 is a “Fijian mat sachet containing brown leather covered visiting card wallet with 5 visiting cards marked ‘Rev. Thomas Williams’. The wallet engraved in gold leaf with ‘Rev. Thomas Williams’, 10 Seymour Crescent, Ballarat.’ The mat sachet also contains 7 echidna quills” (FM's register book, 1979-82). Both these items, in different ways, illustrate the life of missionaries in Fiji before 1854. The former can be read as documenting missionary interest in canoe-building, since in the early years they depended on canoes for inter-island travel, and even commissioned canoes for this purpose. The latter is a hybrid, a European prestigious attribute and treasure box in a Fijian envelope. To whom would Thomas Williams have distributed such visiting cards in Fiji? To Fijian chiefs? To European visitors?



5.7— FM, 2000.547

A few other artefacts can be linked with missionaries from that period, though whether they still exist in museums is uncertain. Lyth's "list of curiosities" has already been mentioned (Lyth n.d.). Also, one *matakau* of the FM (2000.547) bears the inscription "Given to John Hunt 1812-48." It is a female figure of a type that can be compared with an example at CUMAA (Z2812), illustrated by Larsson (1960:46 fig.15). Three other figures were depicted by Williams. Two of them are visible on one page of his sketch book, now at the Mitchell Library (ML). The caption to the sketch indicates: "Two figures in my possession in Sep<sup>r</sup> 1848." One is male, the other female. Both, as well as a third one, were reproduced and commented on by Larsson (1960:14-17, fig.1 & 3). The third is also a female figure. Like *Buinikauvadra* it is mounted on a basket hanger. The sketch in which she appears is dated "Jan<sup>y</sup> 1843." About her, Williams indicated:

"The nameless lady on the opposite page I copied from the original which is in possession of the widow of the late Rev. W. Cross, Chairman of the Feejee District. It is said to have been the goddess of some of the Bau King's carpenters, and to have received certain acts of worship from them... Her ladyship was introduced to me by Mrs. Cross during my visit to Somosomo in 1842-43. At that time her eyes were painted vermillion." (Larsson 1960:16)

The last examples confirm a missionary taste for religious items, evocative of pre-Christian beliefs. Artefacts that were supposedly more mundane may also have joined missionary collections because of religious use. In December 1839, Cargill wrote:

"We terminated our excursion at Viti, the remotest settlement on the banks of the river which is subject to Savou, the king of Naitasiri. The chief and people treated us with great kindness and hospitality. They brought us yanggona and bananas. We begged from them 4 arrows which had been presented to their gods as peace-offerings to appease their wrath and restore the sick to health." (Schütz 1977:168)

Weapons were frequent offerings to Fijian gods. Unfortunately, when specific descriptions are not given, they are not identifiable as such in museums. Thus, Cargill's arrows — if acquired — may have been lost a long time ago.

The preceding has highlighted the opportunistic nature of missionary collecting. Although missionaries focussed on their work and showed an interest in making collections, their writings suggest that they mostly acquired things randomly, or obtained things that Fijians chose to give them. Furthermore, some artefacts remained inaccessible to missionaries until 1854. Williams provided a few examples. On two occasions he mentioned the body ornaments of Tui Cakau in a way that suggests they remained inalienable. Each time, they included a composite breastplate (*civavonovono*). In 1842, he described it as “his large whale's-tooth-mounted breastplate hung round his neck...” (Henderson 1931a:134). In 1843, he portrayed Tui Cakau as follows:

“A *ceva* (breastplate) inlaid with, and surrounded by whales' teeth on his breast; an ear-piece and armlets are his principal ornaments... At his feet lies a great club (a *manda*)...” (Henderson 1931a:187, original emphasis).

The same year, Williams described what he thought to be the tomb of Tui Cakau's favourite wife, but which also contained the remains of Tui Vanua-a-vou (Henderson 1931a:200, n.80):

“The King caused a mound of earth containing many tons to be thrown up. On this he had placed a good double canoe measuring seven fathoms. This was then embedded in earth and a quantity of fine shingle placed on the deck and all this—not to put her poor body in, but to place it upon. Over the deck of the canoe a mahogany roof of eight feet span was erected, the gables fitted in with the same material ornamented with white cowries. An opening of about 2 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. was left at the west end.

“On looking in at this opening I saw a heap of something lying on the shingle which, upon closer inspection, proved to be the remains of this famous lady... Upon touching it an English comb fell out of her head, and two Tonga ones presented themselves to view. Her fleshless neck was surrounded by a whales' tooth necklace (greatly valued in Feejee). Near her lay a Pan's pipe, and some Feejeean trinkets. On the right of the window lay a *liku* or female's dress; on the left a neat little basket containing sundry trifles. These were offerings to her presented by her worshippers, she having been deified since her death.

“The skeleton appeared as though it had been secured in a sitting position by cynnet. When her worshippers suppose she is angry with them they seek to appease her by supplying *masi* or native cloth to cover her remains, but as she is a very sacred character Feejeeans seldom lay the cloth upon her. Tonguese are chosen in preference to Feejeeans.” (Henderson 1931a:200-201, original emphasis)

It is likely that all these offerings had been out of limits in the early 1840s. Their sacred (*tabu*) quality prevented them from being alienated. Had missionaries wanted them, they could only have obtained them via an act of “negative reciprocity” — theft

(Sahlins 1972:195). But nothing in their journals suggests such behaviour. On the contrary, they appeared rather respectful of customs with which they could identify, such as burial.

## Articles given away by missionaries

In exchange for what they received from Fijians, missionaries gave things away. We have already mentioned the books they sold, and the food and sennit they received. Yet, archival documents highlight that this was only a small part of the material transactions between Fijians and missionaries. To sustain their work, missionaries needed to penetrate their hosts' networks and to respond to some of their demands. Among these, Fijians manifested a strong desire for Western goods, to which they had become acquainted via Tongans and early visitors.

As early as December 1835, Cargill reported a great taste for Western manufactured products, in circulation in Lau before the arrival of missionaries. Thus, during the preparation of a feast, Cargill mentioned that two articles were in high demand: whale's teeth and looking glasses (Schütz 1977:71).

This desire for European things, entailed what missionaries often qualified as "begging"<sup>14</sup> — and might otherwise be described as *kerekere* (see Sahlins 1993:855 and chapter 1). For instance, in 1843 Williams depicted Tui'ila'ila as follows:

"When the affairs of the kingdom keep him employed, Tuilaila gives us little trouble. When the reverse is his condition, and time hangs heavily on his hands, we are sure to know it... he informs us that a stranger has come to see him, and presents a very urgent petition for a large knife, or a hatchet, or a broad axe, or *anything else*; and he, not having one by him just sent for us to tell us, and inquire whether we would love him, and give him one, that the strangers might take it and return to their own land... Perhaps next day finds him at our premises begging again, and, if he has come upon us too closely, and we inform him that we cannot do it, he becomes offensive, marches up and down challenging one or the other of us to wrestle or to box ! The proportion which David bore to Goliath was, I suppose, something like what I bear to him, and Bro. Lyth is considerably less than I am. But this is a trifle compared with the line of conduct which he used to pursue a time back. Then he would demand four or five axes a week, and, if they were available, it was at the risk of the missionary's life to tender a refusal.

"Had not Commodore Wilkes, Commander of the United States Exploring Expedition, threatened to burn up his metropolis unless he would pursue a different line of conduct to the Missionaries, I believe he would still demand all he wanted. He has begged from a cotton-ball to a four-post bedstead...

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<sup>14</sup> This is a recurring theme in the Euro-American literature of contact related to Fiji. Interestingly, the same term (to beg) was used by the missionaries themselves, when they requested something they needed with insistence, in a quite Fijian way (see how *kerekere vakaviti* was described by Sahlins (1993)).

“Bro. Lyth's accounts of one or two of the many days spent by him in annoying Missionaries may further show the man...: ‘Tuilaila came today, sat and eat a little food; then desired some vermilion with which, aided by a glass, he painted his face, and then would have his face, breast and body shaved. Being rather ill he next takes Bro. Hunt to a retired spot that he might see his stool, and report on it to Dr Lyth that he might prescribe some medicine for him. Next day he comes to report the effect of the medicine, and ask for more. He is attended by several chiefs for whom he begs 6 butcher's knives !

“Another day—His chieftainship paid us one of his lengthy visits. He first bolted into the bed-room calling out for Mrs Lyth, and untied a long piece of calico that was round his loins, to which he desired a similar piece to be added to make a sheet to cover himself with in bed...

“... His next want was a head-dress, and nothing would satisfy him but a lady's nightcap. This I [Dr Lyth] adjusted to his head which, having been recently shaven, was scarcely any too large for it. With this he was mightily delighted, and went away... After a short absence he returned again and found Mr Hunt and myself engaged in the business of quarter day. He sat down beside us, and, seeing a pen-knife, he took it, and begged leave to cut up some paper that was lying on the table, to see how nicely he could slit it up. This afforded him much pleasure. But no toy pleases him long...

“... He occasionally presents us with a few yams and a little fish; but against the incessant thefts and occasional insolence of his subjects we have *no redress*. Our pigs, poultry and vegetables, which we have to purchase from the people, may be taken from our premises before we can consume them; but to complain to Tuilaila would be as useless as to make our complaints to the winds and waves.” (Henderson 1931a:184-186, original emphasis)

Beside Tui'ila'ila's taste for Western goods, this extract highlights that the desire to possess European things sometimes came with threats. Missionary narratives report that acts of “negative reciprocity” against missionaries' property were not uncommon. In several instances they described the thefts of which they were the victims. Thus, in June 1839 at Lakeba, Cargill wrote:

“For several months we have been annoyed by some malicious and ill disposed persons — who have come to the mission premises through the night, and stolen pots, ovens and other kitchen utensils. Last night they stole two tea kettles. Being determined to put a stop if possible to their depredations, we wrote a list of some of the stolen articles and waited on the king to request him to prevent his people from stealing our property....” (Schütz 1977:140)

Two days later, Cargill described the following scene:

“About 9 O.C. this morning the king's brother with several other chiefs from the principal settlement waited upon us, bringing with them a pot and several articles of wearing apparel which had been stolen from us, — and to our great surprise and regret presented us with the ends of four little fingers which the king had caused to be cut off, as a punishment to the thieves.” (Schütz 1977:142)

Obviously, the traffic of Western goods was a serious matter. At the beginning at least, Methodist missionaries decided to channel it a little by responding to Fijian



demands for European things. Their accounts are eloquent about this. They also shed light on the changes of strategy undertaken by missionaries.

The National Archives of Fiji keep the financial accounts of early Methodist Circuits. Because of the dates it covers, this thesis will only refer to the “Circuit Account Book for the Lakeba Stations” (LAU/C/I) as a case in point. The book starts in 1835 and goes on until the 1840s. It indicates both the property in missionary hands and their employment in missionary transactions. The frontispiece of the book reads: “Trade accounts — Feejee Station — 1835.” The following pages comprise tables. These cover the 1835-1838 period, as long as Cross and Cargill were in charge, with one table per quarter of each year. After the arrival of Hunt, Jaggar and Calvert, in December 1838, lists of property replace the tables. These are of less interest for this thesis because they are less explicit. In fact, they show a certain confusion in the management of missionary goods.

The early tables, however, are highly informative. They are double entry tables. The left column comprises missionaries expenses; the top line indicates the means of payment — mostly Western goods. These categories confirm what has been previously observed. In a few tables, the section “Furniture” is completed with the mention “including mats, etc.” — which suggests that missionaries considered such articles as commodities, even though some were no doubt offered to them. The wages of servants and labourers are noted too. More interesting, perhaps, are the categories “Assistance in the language” and “Presents.” Surprisingly, they were relatively small expenditures in comparison with daily costs, namely “Board”, “Building and fencing”, “Fuel and oil.” The charges for “Travelling expenses”, “Carriage of goods” and “Mission use” varied quite a lot from one quarter to another; but it seems it remained relatively manageable, highlighting missionary priorities and extraordinary needs.

During the first year, the cost of the “assistance in the language” progressively increased. During the first quarter it only represented one “P. iron” and two “Slates.” The following quarter it was two “P. irons”, one “Chisel”, two “P. knives” and two “Razors.” In September 1835, the reported cost was one “Chisel”, one “B. knife”, one “Scissor”, two “Razors, ten yards of “Calico” and one “Shirt.” Yet, in December of the same year the section disappeared from the table, illustrating the missionary progress in that domain

of their work. It reappears several times in the following pages, but the help needed never again reached the peak of September 1835.

That section also illustrates a particular taste for textiles. In general “Calico” and “Print” represented a large part of the missionary payments, with the occasional addition of “Shirts” and “Trousers.” “Beads” and small ironware (e.g. “Gimblets,” “Razors”) seemed in favour too; but of course they were easy to distribute and transport which made them convenient supplies. Globally, the expenses followed the stock. Thus, some articles initially reserved for missionaries were traded when other things were lacking. “Shirts” and “Trousers” are cases in point, as well as “Iron pots” and “Frying pans.” Often in their journals missionaries complained about low stocks. Until a boat was supplied by the Missionary Society, they were dependent on the routes of independent vessels for supply. Sometimes those wrecked or their captains refused to sail (Schütz 1977:98). The result was that trading stock fluctuating dramatically. In a letter to his peers, in August 1838, Cargill wrote:

“Our financial accts are quite a chaos, and now our privations are unnecessarily increased [since a shipload of goods had failed to arrive]. Our supply of trade is a mere pittance notwithstanding the large quantities of articles of barter with which you have from time to time furnished the Bre<sup>n</sup> in the Friendly Is<sup>s</sup>. We have been obliged to sell our trunks & many articles of wearing apparel, & are still under the necessity of giving up to the Mission print & Calico which have been ordered for family use. We are badly off for kitchen utensils — crockeriware &c. We have only *one* tea cup, & that by the by has lost the handle. Please to send us a supply of such things as soon as convenient.” (Schütz 1977:116)

In September 1837 a new category of traded goods appeared in Cargill’s tables, whale’s teeth. They were mostly used to finance “Board” (food), which was the most important of all missionaries’ expenditures. In addition, they were utilized as “Presents,” and to pay for the “Servants and labourers’ wages.” In June 1838, they covered some of the “Building and fencing” expenses too. By September 1838, Cargill and Cross ran out of whale’s teeth again. As would be expected, they had been in high demand.

The trade in whale’s teeth suggests that, like other Western visitors before them, missionaries adapted to their Fijian partners. In several instances their journals indicate that they embraced Fijian categories of exchange too. For example, both Methodist and Catholic missionaries practiced the *soro*, the ritual compensation, demand and/or apology. Calvert gave one example:

“Among the candidates for baptism at Ono was a young lady named Tovo, of the highest rank in the island, who had become truly converted... According to the custom, she had

been betrothed in infancy, and her future husband was the old heathen King of Lakemba. This was well known, and Mr. Calvert refused to baptize the girl unless she resolved that, at any cost, she would refuse to become one of the thirty wives of Tui Nayau. Tovo declared her firm purpose to die rather than fulfil her heathen betrothal. The old Chief her father, and all the Christians, resolved to suffer anything rather than gave her up. When this was made quite clear, the girl was baptized, taking the name of Jemima.” (Calvert 2003:61)

Of course, Tui Nayau was annoyed with the decision and Ono, tributary to him, had to *soro* several times until the apologies and compensations were accepted and peace restored. In one instance at least, the missionaries participated in the *soro*:

“On 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1841, large balls of sinnet arrived from Ono, and were presented the next day, with several articles supplied by the Missionaries, as the customary offering...” (Calvert 2003:65).

That example proves that missionaries involved themselves in local exchanges with which they felt concerned. It also highlights the missionary impact on Fijian customs, especially customs of which they disapproved, such as the polygamy of chiefs. Although the weight of Tui Ono’s politics *vis-à-vis* Tui Nayau cannot be underestimated in this affair, it seems that the role of missionaries was crucial.

## Indirect impact of missionaries on Fiji-West exchanges

The lack of large missionary ensembles in museums is all the more surprising because missionaries arrived in Fiji at a period when exchanges with Westerners, especially material exchanges, had reached a climax (see previous chapters). It is probable, however, that missionaries impacted on other exchanges in which they did not take a direct part.

*Matakau* figures and *yaqona* dishes have already been discussed. Some of them became available to Westerners when Christianity began to challenge the traditional beliefs with which they were associated. Similarly, less notable artefacts seemed to become alienable because they were attached to traditions disapproved of by missionaries. *Liku* skirts are a case in point. Missionaries disapproved of them because, from their point of view, they did not constitute decent clothing.

Wigs (*ulumate* or *ulucavu*) and ear-ornaments (*saunidaliga*) are other examples. It seems they mainly became available to Westerners in the late 1830s. At the beginning of this chapter one wig was specifically mentioned (MdC D979-3-1187). The entry from the catalogue of the *Musée de la Propagation de la Foi* reads: “N°113. Headdress in the

form of wig, very much in use in the Fiji islands, given to M<sup>gr</sup> Pompallier by the inhabitants of the island Haquemba”(my translation).<sup>15</sup>

It is confirmed by several sources that Mgr Pompallier stopped at Lakeba on his way to New Zealand in 1842. On the 6th of November 1842, his report to the President and members of the *Association de la Propagation de la Foi* indicated:

“From the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1841 until the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1842, I was constantly travelling and visiting missions. During that time, I exerted my work in almost all the bays of the eastern coast of New Zealand and in the tropical area in the islands Vava’u, Wallis, Futuna [‘Uvea], Oneata of Fiji, Lakeba and Tongatapu...

“Monsieur Epalle, one pro-vicar of mine, has gone to France... I only regret that monsieur Epalle, whom I had designated to go to France if I could not go myself, had been obliged to leave three months before my return from the tropics. I would have given him the necessary writings, little pieces of work which may be of interest to the Association. I will compensate for that lack a little by sending you part by part my mission journals, which I am having copied. I think that monsieur Epalle will not forget to offer you the objects from these lands, curious for our European countries; these are little souvenirs of our eternal gratitude for you, sirs, and for the benefactress Association de la Propagation de la Foi. I had made a kind of little museum with those objects. I have brought several more from the tropical islands, which I will send on another occasion of a messenger going to Europe...” (Girard 2008:148 & 151, my translation)<sup>16</sup>

It is not known when the wig arrived in Lyon. Also unknown are the exact circumstances of its acquisition. The catalogue entry suggests a quite solemn gift from a number of inhabitants from Lakeba. Is it possible, however, that it was a public transaction, involving only a few high-ranking exchange partners directly. Some questions remain: Why did Pompallier receive that specific artefact? From whom? And, to what extent was it alienable? A brief analysis of other wigs from early museum collections and historical writings may inform these circumstances a little.

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<sup>15</sup> From the original in French: “n° 113. Coiffure en forme de perruque, très en usage aux îles Fidji, donnée à Mgr Pompallier par les habitants de l'île de Haquemba. (Don des RR. PP. Maristes.)”

<sup>16</sup> “Depuis le 23 juillet 1841 jusqu'au 26 août 1842, j'ai toujours été en voyage et en visite des missions. Pendant ce temps-là mes travaux se sont exercés dans presque toutes les baies de la côte est de la Nouvelle-Zélande et sous la zone tropicale aux îles de Vava'u, de Wallis, de Futuna, Oneata de Fidji, Lakeba, et Tongatapu. (...)

Monsieur Epalle, l'un de mes pro-vicaires, est parti en France (...) J'ai seulement le regret que monsieur Epalle, que j'avais désigné pour faire le voyage en France si je ne pouvais y aller moi-même, ait été obligé de partir trois mois avant mon retour des tropiques. Je lui aurais remis les écrits nécessaires et de petits ouvrages qui sont de nature à intéresser l'Association. Je vais y suppléer un peu en vous envoyant partie par partie de mes journaux de mission que je fais copier. Je pense que monsieur Epalle n'oubliera pas de vous offrir des objets de ces pays-ci, objets curieux pour nos pays d'Europe ; ce sont de petits souvenirs de notre éternelle reconnaissance pour vous, messieurs, et pour la bienfaitrice Association de la Propagation de la Foi. J'avais fait de ces objets une sorte de petit musée. J'en ai apporté plusieurs autres des îles des tropiques que j'enverrai à une autre occasion de messenger pour l'Europe. (...)”

## Wigs

In early times, *ulumate* were mostly made of human hair, but later specimens exist in horse hair (Clunie 2003a: fig.82) or even in leaves. All of them share a vegetal base structure, more or less rigid. This one consists in a *magimagi* net or in a basket-like frame made of a kind of reed. The hair is intricately entwined into it. Some wigs show a variety of colours, with patches of different hair shades. Sometimes traces of mineral pigment survive, reminiscent of the way Fijians took care of their hair.



5.8— NMNH, E2909

Among the finest specimens examined during this work is one *ulumate* in the Wilkes collection (SI E2909). It is well preserved and impressive in size, symmetrical features and skilful manufacture. Especially remarkable is the fall of *tobe* ringlets at the back. These were indicative of high status, most likely that of a chief or celebrated warrior (Clunie 1982b:3).



5.9— “La reine de Pao” (Dumont d’Urville 1841-54, Atlas: pl.87)

Wigs were worn by Fijian men *and* women of high-rank. The above portrait of the “Queen” of Bau, from Dumont d’Urville’s second narrative, confirms it.<sup>17</sup> Wigs were associated with powerful individuals and with the most sacred part of their body, the head, only exposed for “profound social or religious reasons” (Clunie 1982b:7). Wigs were notably worn after mourning sacrifices. The relatives and subjects of the deceased shaved their head in commemoration and manifestation of their sorrow (Clunie 2003a:79; Clunie 1982b:7-8). Exceptionally, the hair of a high-ranking personage could be used as an offering to Fijian gods. Thus, from Lyth’s journal Clunie reported that in 1844 “Tui’ila’ila shaved his head as a *soro* and token of his humiliation before the god Nusuinanu when he failed to forge the raging torrent of the Somosomo Creek to the temple...” (Clunie 1982b:8). This was a particularly demonstrative gesture for Fijians took great pride in their hair. Wigs served to “heal” that pride until the hair had grown back or when, in the case of bald people, it was gone forever. At any rate, they must be regarded as significant artefacts, associated with high-ranking individuals and with the most *tabu* part of their person.

A number of *ulumate* exist in early collections. A few date back to the early 1830s (e.g. PEM E5086). Yet, most of them were given away after missionaries had settled in

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<sup>17</sup> The lady portrayed here is most likely Adi Talatoka, a favourite wife of Ratu Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu of Bau.

the islands. It has been already noted that one missionary task was to oppose habits associated with pre-Christian rituals. And, in addition to being manifestations of paganism, wigs and massive headdresses were considered unhygienic (Clunie 1982b:8). On the other hand, it seems that Fijians quite easily parted with their wigs from the late 1830s. A number of them were offered to high-ranking individuals, as prestigious presents, and perhaps as a diplomatic sign of allegiance. For instance, Mary Wallis, the wife of the Salem trader Samuel Wallis, received a royal present of a wig. It was from a daughter of Cakobau, in April 1845 (Wallis 1851:76). The corresponding artefact may now be in Salem (PEM E30489?).

*Ulumate* appear to have been valuable gifts, preferably exchanged between high-ranking individuals. Due to the context, one could also wonder if, by giving them away, Fijians hoped they would be preserved from the iconoclastic actions of missionaries (see Hooper 2008). It seems likely that Fijians knew that their exchange partners would keep them, even if as Reynolds suggested they did not completely understand the concept of a museum (Hoffman Cleaver & Stann 1998:165).

It is therefore possible that Mgr Pompallier received the wig now at the MdC from a chiefly personage of Lakeba. By 1842 Methodist missionaries had been increasingly successful on this island, encouraging departures from traditional customs. Since he expressly collected things for his “little museum,” such a gift to Pompallier might be regarded as a way of keeping-while-giving a precious artefact.

### Ear-ornaments

Ear-ornaments, *saunidaliga*, were another kind of body-adornment related to mourning sacrifices, and much disliked by missionaries. In early collections a few of them survive; but in contrast to wigs they are far more numerous in later collections. In Washington, for instance, there is one example that consists in a ring of light wood, ornamented with faceted glass beads (SI E3050). Such beads appear frequently in the US Exploring Expedition’s collection and are rare elsewhere — which makes them valuable chronological markers. On this artefact, most beads that remain are blue or green, i.e. highly valued (see chapters 2 & 3). They are also particularly shiny, due to their facets. They must have been indicative of a precious object associated with an individual of high-status. In the Fiji Museum there is another object of that type, originally acquired



by Constance Gordon Cumming in the 1870s (FM 86.18). However, its white and blue beads are common rounded ones.



5.10— NMNH, 3050



5.11— NMNH, 3002

Washington's and Salem's collections also include a few *saunidaliga* made of shells. There is one in Washington that is made of a large *cava* shell (SI E3002). On coastal areas *cava* were so precious that they could be used as *tabua*, along with other kinds of shells (Roth 1973:97-99). The PEM collection also comprises a specimen, attributed to Captain Vanderford (1823), made of kind a tubular shell, already discussed in chapter 3 (PEM E5363). There is a quite similar specimen in Cambridge (CUMAA Z2716), from early colonial times.



5.12— PEM, E5363



5.13— CUMAA, Z2716

Like wigs, *saunidaliga* were worn by both men and women. They had significant meanings, being associated with *tabu* moments of individuals' lives (Clunie & Ligairi 1983b; Clunie 1979). The simplest consisted in rolled up leaves, but some comprised

precious materials. In early colonial collections, notably in Cambridge (CUMAA), Auckland (AM) and Suva (FM), there is a profusion of them, many of which are made of whale ivory. However, from 1774 to 1854, no ivory specimen has been found — to date. The few surviving items may be regarded as indicative of early changes in Fijian practices due to missionary presence in the islands.

Since the Middle Ages, Christian iconography had depicted body ornaments such as earrings and piercings as the attributes of marginalized personages, whose attitude or employment could not be accepted within the Christian community. Bruna demonstrated that this was because piercing or mutilating the human body was synonymous with blasphemy – disrespect for God’s work and commandments (2001:41, 47, 78-80). It is therefore likely that piercing the ears, along with tattooing, was seen as indicative of Fijian “depravity.” Missionaries probably fought hard to discourage these practices because they could be seen as visible manifestations of their lack of success.

## Conclusion: intellectual transactions?

During the period under consideration, the connections between several chiefdoms of the Fijian archipelago slowed the progression of the Christian faith. It is clear from missionary writings that to become a Christian, when a powerful ally, and moreover a chief, had not, would be considered an act of hostility. In contrast, to imitate one’s chief was regarded as loyalty or allegiance. Henceforth, except in the case of a more or less explicit opposition — that of Ono *vis-à-vis* Lakeba for example — many Fijians, including high-ranking individuals, expressed their reluctance to convert before others had done so. Cargill provided a number of examples. In 1837, he quoted or paraphrased Tui Nayau: “When Tanoa becomes a Christian, I will follow him” (Schütz 1977:98). In 1839, he wrote in his journal: “The king of Rewa is favourably disposed to Christianity, and says he only waits for Tanoa to turn to God, and that he shall then follow him” (*Ibid.*:123). A few months later, he reported:

“With regard to native missionaries, the King [of Naitasiri] expressed a fear of giving offence to the Rewa and Bau chiefs, and seemed on their account reluctant to have any of them residing with them; but stated a desire to have them at some future period.” (Schütz 1977:169)

These three examples indicate that the Vunivalu of Bau, Tanoa, and by extension his successor Cakobau, was as a key target for conversion. However, beside political strategies, another hindrance awaited the missionaries. Calvert explained:

“On arriving in the islands, the Missionaries had found it necessary to conciliate the Chiefs and people, and obtain a safe dwelling among them, by the liberal distribution of presents. The practice, which thus began with necessity, had been continued in compliance with the shameless opportunity of the Chiefs, until it had grown into a burdensome tax, and placed Missionaries upon a false footing, by endangering their spiritual influence over the people, in substituting that which any one might gain by gifts. Among the people themselves, the presentation of a gift without an equivalent in return was an acknowledgment of inferiority and subjection, whence arose another important reason why a clear understanding should be established in this matter.” (Calvert 2003:283)

What Calvert described here could be interpreted as a system of “balanced reciprocity,” implying a return for each thing given but without immediacy needed. It seems it was combined with a “pooling system,” typical of the Fijian hierarchical organization discussed in chapter 1. By placing themselves under the protection and to some extent under the patronage of Fijian chiefs, missionaries inserted themselves into the *within* relations between chiefs and their people. From a Fijian viewpoint, it must have been perceived as normal for a chief to obtain and accumulate goods from those who were under his chiefly protection and who needed him for food, shelter, etc. The true problem, it seems, was a latent misunderstanding between the two parties. It obliged the chiefs to “beg” and the missionaries to “pay.” Anyhow, by the end of the 1840s a change of strategy was envisaged. Mr Hunt “was now coming to Viwa with the resolution of abolishing the system of promiscuous giving” (Calvert 2003:283). Calvert described his arrival:

“When the Missionary’s goods arrived from Lakemba, Thakombau went on board the Wesley, accompanied by Mr. Calvert, who, according to the established custom, as a newcomer, presented the Chief with an offering of property from the district he had left, consisting of two large wooden bowls, a bale of sinnet, and two China pigs. These were received very graciously: but on their way to the shore, Thakombau was compelled to listen to one of the lectures he dreaded so much. It was the first step towards the intended reformation and was after this fashion: ‘... I left England originally with one object, and for that alone I have come to live with you in this part of Fiji. My one great object is to have you saved from your sins... While this is the only object I have in view, I am aware that you are destitute of many articles which we have in England, and which would increase your comfort. Some of this I can obtain for you by writing to my friends in England. I shall be glad to do so, as I should like to see you improved and raised in temporal matters. Only, when I send for goods, I have to pay for them, *and you must pay for whatever I obtain for you*. We give our time and energies to your salvation; but we have not come to supply you with worldly riches. Yet, if you will pay for what you

require, we will try to obtain useful articles for you.” (Calvert 2003:283-284, original emphasis)

In this quite paradoxical discourse, what Hunt promised to Cakobau, aside from spiritual transactions, was a *commercial relationship*. In other words, Methodist missionaries hoped to move from a system of “balanced reciprocity,” which they rather interpreted as “negative reciprocity,” to a form of reciprocity that implied immediacy — i.e. an exchange of commodities in the Occidental fashion (see chapter 1). And yet, the last sentence suggests they wished for no confusion between them and other Western visitors such as traders... Cargill’s journal shows that, in any case, from the early contact period an association was made linking Western goods, Western God and Western power. In 1837, David Cargill reported Tui Cakau’s view of the matter:

“When the elder man was questioned about the truth of Christianity, he replied: True — everything is true that comes from the white man’s country: muskets & gunpowder are true, & your religion must be true.” (Schütz 1977:95)

Again, material things provide a foundation for relations between Fijians and missionaries. And in fact it remained so until 1854 at least. Calvert went on:

“Thakombau listened complacently... and said he was glad to know the right plan, and should like to be informed of what was expected in payment for any articles he might hereafter desire. A decisive and important step was thus taken, which made it easier to resist the perpetual begging of smaller people. Yet, in many cases, it was still hard to refuse... Nevertheless, though it was still necessary to make occasional presents, the more reserved plan was found to answer; for the people learned to value what they worked for, and gained self-respect in being rid of a system which pauperized them.” (Calvert 2003:284-285)

Calvert’s conclusion bears testimony to the missionaries’ wish to transform their hosts, rather than actually documenting such a transformation. It has been mentioned already that Cakobau was subject to external financial/economic pressures, as well as political ones, when he converted in 1854 (chapter 1). But it seems this had been his agenda for a while, even though he avoided it as long as possible. In 1845, after Verani’s conversion, Wallis reported an interesting sentence attributed to Cakobau. Talking about his newly converted friend, the Vunivalu said: “I told him to wait a little, and then we would ‘lotu’ together” (Wallis 1851:70, original emphasis). One reason he would have thought conversion worthwhile was increased access to Western things. In spite of this, Verani’s decision remained a kind of treason. It is Wallis again who reported a message possibly sent from Bau to Verani. She quoted: “Verani, send us the riches that you have obtained by ‘lotuing.’ They belong to us. Why have you ‘lotued?’ What have we

done, that you have become angry with us, and left us?" (Wallis 1851:71, original emphasis). In truth, Cakobau had been the one in control, for he had a lot to offer. His conversion was the object of missionary desire and so were also his people's souls. Their workmanship was also much desired by Westerners. Perhaps this discussion should therefore finish with another quote from Mary Wallis:

"He [Cakobau] tells Mr. W. that if he '*lotues*,' he will burn his '*beech de mer*' houses, and forbid the natives to fish." (Wallis 1851:82, original emphasis)

As far as we know, he did not. But the forces in play had changed by 1854. Cakobau, like most key actors in Fiji-West early relations, adapted to the circumstances.

## Chapter 6

# Museum objects, circulating objects

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The previous chapters demonstrated that most early museum artefacts from Fiji are in essence objects of exchange. This chapter intends to open the perspectives. With reference to Clifford's concept of museums as "contact zones" (1997), it offers to link early museum items from Fiji with their historical agency as circulating artefacts. The point is not solely to understand how the collections were made in the past. It is to comprehend to what extent is that history relevant for today's museum practices (see Byrne *et al.* 2011:5). By doing so, it is hoped that a better understanding and use of these artefacts could be reached, in the twenty-first-century context of globalization and modern communications, and with regards to current concerns and interests from Fiji.

## The paradoxical nature of early museum objects from Fiji

### Circulating artefacts

By working on early Fiji-West transactions (1774-1854) through the scope of museum collections one could have expected to encounter some, if not many, stolen or plundered artefacts. On the contrary, this research has shown that the majority of early Fijian items now in museums were obtained via relatively balanced transactions between Fijian, European and American actors. Chapter 4 has shown that early Western visitors could hardly acquire anything through violent interactions in Fiji. In general, chapters 1-5 demonstrated that most exchange partners were conscious of the sacrifices they made, in accordance with their own agendas, even though such sacrifices were not always accurately evaluated by the other party.

Moreover, both historical documents and contemporary ethnography shed light on a "circulating" conception of things in Fiji, which escapes almost completely the Western categories of *property*.<sup>1</sup> For instance, it was recalled in chapter 1 that Thomas described Fijian *iyau* as neither "gifts" nor "commodities:"

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<sup>1</sup> Several notions of property, as well as their relevance in the case of early artefacts from Fiji, will be discussed later in this chapter.

“The objects which are presented in Fijian ceremonial exchange are thus not like gifts which generate the debt so generally postulated in anthropological theory. They are like a stone which makes a splash — for a moment — and then sinks quietly to the bottom of a deep pool. At the time of the transaction, everyone is thinking about how much *iyau* is presented, what fine pots and mats, what substantial *tabua*. But once these things move elsewhere, they carry no inscription. What does remain instead is something settled, the relationship, and agreement to provide assistance, or the acknowledgement that assistance was provided and recompensed. Certain practices, then, are like gifts. They endure, create a lien, and in that sense have ‘inalienable’ ramifications.

“... the whole function of *iyau* is to be alienated; with characteristic insight Hocart drew attention to the etymology: ‘lit. that which is carried or transferred.’ There is, in fact, a radical sense in which valuables belong elsewhere.” (Thomas 1991:67-68, original emphasis)

The core of this thesis mentioned a few personal belongings of specific individuals such as high-ranking chiefs. Among these chiefs were Yavala, Tui Cakau and previous owner of the headdress now kept by the Smithsonian Institution (ET136), and Tanoa Visawaqa, Vunivalu of Bau, the prestigious possessor of the breastplate (*civavonovono*) now in Cambridge (CUMAA 1918.213.14). The fact that their names remained associated with certain artefacts bears testimony to the “inalienable ramifications” Thomas evoked. Such items can also be linked to what Gell called “distributed personhood:”

“We suffer, as patients, from forms of agency mediated via images of ourselves, because, as social persons, we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, and our agency.” (Gell 1998:103)

Both Thomas’s “inalienable ramifications” and Gell’s “distributed personhood” differ from the Western concept of ownership. Today, the above-mentioned ornaments remain related to their bearers’ existence and agency. Originally, they may have been perceived as fragments of themselves, but also as symbols of their chieftainship. In Forge’s terms they were non-verbal markers of their status and power (1973).

From a Western viewpoint, prestigious bearers added value to objects quite systematically. For instance, Wilkes specifically mentioned Tui Cakau while describing the circumstances in which he acquired the headdress at Somosomo — even though he did not seem to value it apart from its association with the ruling chief. The *civavonovono* was precisely described as Tanoa’s in literary and pictorial sources, decades before Sir Gordon acquired it. Such descriptions highlight connections between specific artefacts and individuals of high rank, both regarded as important by Euro-Americans witnesses. Similarly, in museums a huge number of artefacts are attributed to



Cakobau, who was from the late 1840s the best known Fijian chief in Europe and North America. These were mostly acquired after 1854. Yet, they are cases in point here because their number would lead one to think that Cakobau's name added value to anything obtained in Fiji during the second half of the nineteenth century — whether the connection was genuine or not (e.g. FM 82.4). By comparison the names of exchange partners of lower rank are hardly ever mentioned; and this is especially true before 1854, save for a few exceptions among missionary collections.

Thus presented, the association between artefacts and individuals looks like a Western fixation, connected to European notions of individual property. In contrast, once exchanged away, things would have kept “no inscription” of their original owner(s) or initial context(s) of exchange in Fiji (Thomas 1991:67). However, this now seems only partly true. First, there has been a recent growth of interest in Fiji in objects associated with historical personalities such as Fijian chiefs. The Foreword to the catalogue of the *Chiefs and Governors* exhibition, by Fiji's UK High Commissioner, exemplifies this well. Solo Mara wrote:

“The fact that some of the artefacts on display belonged to prominent Fijian chiefs, who played significant roles in both Fiji's pre-Christian era and in its colonial period, makes my involvement an even greater privilege.” (In Herle & Carreau 2013:iv).

The notion of museum objects as active links between past and present will be discussed in due course, but it is also known that some Fijian artefacts kept strong associations with their chiefly owner(s) in historical times. For instance, some were inherited generation after generation. Sometimes, they were given away to a European exchange partner at one point, or deposited at the Fiji Museum (FM). But in both cases it seems it was with the insurance that prominent names would survive. Again, Tanoa's — and Cakobau's — breastplate is a case in point.

This given, Thomas seems quite right in saying that, from most things exchanged in Fiji “what does remain ... is... the relationship” (1991:67). Nowadays, a number of articles have little intrinsic value in comparison with the significance of the relations they help to build and maintain via exchanges. At this point an example from 2010 is relevant. A Fijian friend of mine wanted to make a gift to his aunt. After consulting her, he offered her a coffin, which related to her advanced age as well as to the prestige of being properly buried. Yet, when he visited her, shortly after, the coffin was missing. She explained that somebody needed it but that he should not worry, the coffin would come

back — a different one, of course. And it did so, several times. This story teaches us two things. First, even the less exchangeable objects that a Euro-American could imagine can circulate in Fiji. Secondly, in the Fijian way of thinking, the old lady will still be buried in the coffin her nephew provided. In that example, the actual materiality of the object seems barely relevant, while its circulation extends and strengthens the family social network significantly, consequently rendering the object more valuable.

## Museum artefacts

The paradox of all the objects this thesis considers is that they are now in museums. From exchanged objects they became museum items, most of them now regarded as ethnographic artefacts. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett defined ethnographic objects as follows:

“The artfulness of the ethnographic object is an art of excision, of detachment, an art of the excerpt... Perhaps we should speak not of the ethnographic object but of the ethnographic fragment.” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:18)

Once detached from their initial context, and although their original alienability induced their current status, early artefacts from Fiji lost some of their inherent features such as their exchangeability. The mutation drastically restricted their circulation. At best, their movements are limited. In most cases, their immobility and inalienability seem rather entrenched. In France, for example, the inalienability of national collections is a legal disposition. It can only be overcome via a complex procedure of displacement (*Code du Patrimoine*, L451-5).

Not being circulated anymore, one could say the objects encountered a premature death. A number of artefacts discussed here are not remembered in Fiji today. The knowledge attached to them has decreased over the years, as though they only belong to the past, and as if museums were mere cemeteries for dead things. That has been a negative observation often formulated in Fiji. In a recent presentation Sagale Buadromo, current director of the Fiji Museum, explained:

“We are fighting for the very people — locals and villagers — who think that the museum is only where ‘dead and old things’ are kept and some of whom have never set foot in our premises... even the Fijian name of the museum makes them chuckle... *Vale ni yaya maroroi* or House of treasured objects... the word ‘yaya’ — or objects — is also a slang for genitalia.”<sup>2</sup> (Buadromo, Cambridge, 7th June 2013)

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<sup>2</sup> In a discussion, Ratu Sela Rayawa, the librarian of the Fiji Museum, said that a better name for the museum — which is a literal translation from English — could be “vale ni iyau maroroi”, i.e. the place where the *precious things* are kept. The word (*i*)yaya has indeed a trivial connotation, which *iyau* has not. (Personal communication, July 2010)

On the other hand, Grognet defined the museum as a place where artefacts are reborn (2005:paragraph 2). In Appadurai's words, the museum would be a step within the "social life of things," a part of their itinerary through "different *regimes of value* in space and time" (1986:4, original emphasis). Put another way, "agency does not cease with the acquisition of objects" (Byrne *et al.* 2011:4). Yet, in their current "regime of value" early artefacts from Fiji seem to have lost touch with what initially animated them, their agency as objects of exchange and their value from a Fijian viewpoint. The latter point is linked to the knowledge of such objects, especially of what they were before the exchange. It can also be related to their significance in the building and stimulation of beneficial exchange relations in historical times. In other words, the question is: how can early museum items from Fiji keep exerting their agency — this one being regarded as an "*ability to make a difference*" rather than as an "intended action" (Harrisson 2013:17, original emphasis)?

## Building on the original nature of Fijian early museum collections

At this point, it seems essential to build on the original agency of early museum artefacts from Fiji. Put another way, it would be fruitful to bring back together the artefacts with the idea of them being objects of exchange and, by extension, circulating items. Several ways of getting them back in circulation shall now be envisaged.

## Museums as places of exchange

Several authors have described museums as places of exchange. Among them, Clifford characterized the museum as a "contact zone," building upon Pratt's definition of "the space of colonial encounters" (Clifford 1997:192). Clifford's departure point was an experience of his at the Portland's Art Museum in 1989, involving a delegation of Tlingit dignitaries. He generalized:

"When museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship—a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull." (Clifford 1997:192)

Going back to his example, he continued:

"What transpired in the Portland Museum's basement was not reducible to a process of collecting advice or information... A message was delivered, performed, within an ongoing contact history. As evoked in the museum's basement, Tlingit history did not

primarily illuminate or contextualize the objects of the Rasmussen Collection. Rather, the objects provoked (called forth, brought to voice) ongoing stories..." (Clifford 1997:193)

One could find similarities between Clifford's case study and the particular situation of early museum artefacts from Fiji. Because a number of objects do not exist any more in Fiji — some having fallen into complete oblivion — the pre-eminence of the artefacts themselves is essential. They first tell the stories; so that such stories may then be replaced within an ongoing history (see Byrne *et al.* 2011), in a second moment of the reflection. Consequently, a second similarity between Clifford's example and our case study is the desirability of an on-going relationship, throughout history and space. This is the condition of a fair and mutually beneficial exploitation of museum collections.

Clifford stressed a couple of issues that need to be addressed. First, he warned his reader against a Euro-centric tendency, correlated to the presumed asymmetry discussed in chapter 1, consisting in interpreting artefacts through the sole prism of "contact." With reference to a quite brutal colonial history, Clifford explained:

"It would be wrong to reduce the objects' traditional meanings, the deep feelings they still evoke, to 'contact' responses. If a mask recalls a grandfather or an old story, this must include feelings of loss and struggle; but it must also include access to powerful continuity and connection." (Clifford 1997:193)

By chance, early contacts between Fijians and Euro-Americans were far less traumatic than those in Tlingit colonial history. Nonetheless, it seems necessary to embrace a number of *regimes of value* and agencies (see Byrne *et al.* 2011) in our reflection. Most early museum artefacts from Fiji are objects of exchange. They were traded in the context of cross-cultural transactions between Euro-Americans and Fijians. However, they were also Fijian *iyau*, or *iyaya*, with specific significances in their original context of circulation. And they have since become museum items, connected with a number of international categories, some of which still add value to them (e.g. historical interest, formal features). None of these aspects can be ignored.

Another *sine qua non* condition to the museum acting as a "contact zone" is the *reciprocity of the exchange*; not the initial one which has been discussed already — although a fair preliminary transaction always seems like a good start — but the on-going exchange relationship. It is the latter that allows museum artefacts to tell their stories and to act as bridges between the past and the present, as well as between their place of origin and their current place of keeping. Yet, Clifford stated:

“While reciprocity is a crucial stake, it will not be understood in the same way by people from different cultures... Reciprocity in the Tlingit's demands for help was not, as in a commercial transaction, the goal of being paid up, quit. Rather, the intent was to challenge and rework a relationship.” (Clifford 1997:194)

The concept of reciprocity and its variations have been discussed in chapter 1, with specific reference to Sahlins (1972). In particular, Sahlins shed light on the complexity of “real situations” where several forms of reciprocity overlap each other (1972:213). Quite similarly, quoting O’Hanlon, Clifford summarized: “‘Reciprocity,’ a standard for fair dealings, is a translation term, whose meanings will depend on specific contact situations” (Clifford 1997:194). He continued:

“It is important to keep the possibilities for subversion and reciprocity (or relatively benign mutual exploitation) in tension with the long history of ‘exotic’ displays in the West. This history provides a context of enduring power imbalance within and against which the contact work of travel, exhibition, and interpretation occurs. An ongoing ideological matrix governs the understanding of ‘primitive’ people in ‘civilized’ places.” (Clifford 1997:197)

In the case of Fijian early collections, it must be remembered that, if there was an imbalance, this one mostly transpired from the Euro-American vision of Fiji-West early transactions. This is quite vivid in a number of early Western descriptions of the Fijian archipelago, its inhabitants and their material productions, from the late eighteenth century onwards. Historically, such descriptions were full of a Euro-centric complex of superiority, framing the idea of an inevitable asymmetry. This whole thesis aims to challenge that schema.

Now, an asymmetry exists that was only briefly mentioned in chapter 1; most early collections from Fiji are now kept outside of Fiji. The access to these artefacts is therefore limited for Fijians. By chance, due to the evolution of the “ideological matrix” Clifford evoked above, many modern museums are now willing to repair this imbalance, especially if they can obtain some reciprocal benefit such as increase of knowledge about their collections and positive publicity.

In parallel to this critical introspection of museums, there has been a recent growth of interest in Fiji for historical and pre-historical witnesses of the past, now kept in museums. About the relevance of the Fiji Museum to the local community, Ms. Buadromo explained:

“For 20 or so years, we have concentrated on bringing the museum to an ‘Unwilling and uninterested’ local audience and a very ‘willing’ tourist audience... But we are gradually detracting from that ‘sharp clear picture that intrudes into our daily museum struggle

mindset’... That struggle in the picture comes from the fact that the very people who think that we are ‘a house that you deposit dead things in’ realise that the museum is actually now their last hope to champion their old village sites and protect them from development, road works, logging and mining companies...

“... have we become relevant to the grassroots people — yes we have, but it has been surprising to us that it was the Archaeology department of the Fiji Museum that brought them to us, and not the Collections department with its many artefacts that I would have thought would have been more relevant to the people since the things we have are what they have in their homes and that they still use in their everyday lives such as mats, *tabua* (whale teeth), *masi* (barkcloth) and so on...but surprises aside...we are delighted that we have become of some importance to the people of Fiji...” (Cambridge, 7th June 2013)

The FM has begun to act as a “contact zone.” Although it is the remote past that seems to chiefly mobilized the Fijian community today. It is possible that in the near future the interest could spread to historical things which do not exist in Fiji anymore, and to those that can be related to modern items. It is also likely that the Fijian interest for the local museum could extend to overseas institutions. The Fijian community is more widely distributed today than it has ever been. There is a significant contingent of Fijian soldiers in the British military forces, most of whom live in the UK with their families. A number of them are also sent on field operations, notably in the Middle East. Furthermore, in New Zealand, Australia and on the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada, Fijian communities are numerous. And one cannot forget that a number of Fijians are rugby players in foreign leagues, notably in France. These emigrants are well-connected. Via modern technologies and long distance travel, they keep strong ties with their home country. Thus, they can inform the people of Fiji about what is going on outside the country.

In parallel to that high connectivity of Fijian migrants, it has become quite usual for museums to require the help of local communities, including expatriated ones, in their search for an appropriate management of museum collections. “[They] have begun to acknowledge indigenous categories and curatorial practices as forms of expertise...” (Harrisson 2013:12).<sup>3</sup> This is notably the case in Anglo-Saxon countries such as Canada, the USA and the UK. For instance, this is one tool of the AHRC-funded project on Fijian art, currently at work at the Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU) in Norwich, and at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (CUMAA)

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<sup>3</sup> One must however be cautious: “...This does not necessarily reform the system. The original categories and underlying values on which they rest often remain in place.” (Harrisson 2013:12)

([www.fijianart.sru.uea.ac.uk](http://www.fijianart.sru.uea.ac.uk)). The collaboration between museum people and Fijian residents in the U.K. has already proved fruitful in the context of the exhibition *Chiefs and Governors*, that opened at Cambridge in June 2013. The information was quite well relayed in Fiji, notably via social networks such as Facebook®. Of course, this also means that the connectivity of people *in Fiji* is increasing. That is an important point, further discussed below.

For a few decades now, the FM has also shown a deep interest in historical collections kept outside Fiji. That focus emerged in the late 1970s, under the impulse of Fergus Clunie — former director of the FM. Clunie travelled to the USA in the 1980s to study early museum collections. A number of articles in the FM's reviews, *Fiji Heritage* and subsequently *Domodomo*, record his research. Recently, collaboration between Museum Victoria of Melbourne (Australia) and the FM led to a refurbishment of the FM's storage and to a website. The latter draws attention to the Fijian collection of Melbourne, along with old photographs from the FM's collection (<http://museumvictoria.com.au/fiji/index.aspx>).

It seems that both the actual and potential Fijian interests for museum collections could benefit from a reconciliation between the current status of early museum items and their initial nature as circulating artefacts. Moreover, such a reconciliation might suits Western museums too, for they are in the middle of an ideological and ethical crisis about what they are and want to be. It is precisely for initiatives going in that direction that Clifford militated. He encouraged academics to rethink museums and museum items as follows:

“All sites of collection begin to seem like places of encounter and passage. Seen this way, objects currently in the great museums are travelers, crossers—some strongly ‘diasporic’ with powerful, still very meaningful, ties elsewhere. ... This rethinking of collections and displays as unfinished historical processes of travel, of crossing and recrossing, changes one's conception of patrimony and public...

“My account argues for a democratic politics that would challenge the hierarchical valuing of different places of crossing. It argues for a decentralization and circulation of collections in a multiplex public sphere, an expansion of the range of things that can happen in museums and museum-like settings.” (Clifford 1997:213-214)

In other words, Clifford argued for a more dynamic conception of museums and museum items, with greater accessibility to the general public. Beyond this, he pleaded in favour of an increased circulation of persons too, for “contact zones are constituted



through reciprocal movements of people, not just of objects, messages, commodities, and money” (Clifford 1997:195).

## Back in circulation

Clifford’s “hybrid” conception of museums, along with his circulating vision of museum items, is nevertheless problematic. He stressed:

“This is relatively easy to imagine between national and tribal or ethnic museums. But can a museum allow art and artifacts to travel in and out of the ‘world of museums’ (an emerging network considerably larger than what is usually called the ‘museum world’)? Movement of collections in and out of the world of museums is still quite difficult for curators and boards of directors to accept, given the traditional economy and mission of the Western museum. It would require breaking with strong traditions of conservationism...” (Clifford 1997:212)

The sole movements of collections Clifford envisaged as unproblematic, with regards to his own case study, were movements between museums *within* the same country. However, even between museums the difficulty grows significantly if one envisages an international circulation; and of course in the case of early items from Fiji international translations must be expected. What Clifford mentioned regarding the “traditional economy and mission of the Western museum” and its “strong traditions of conservationism” applies to international transfers too, especially if the recipient is in a less wealthy country than the museum source. This again would be the case for most movements of artefacts towards Fiji.

Besides the practical difficulties of long-distance transportation, the above-mentioned decision-makers — namely “curators and boards of directors” — face a number of ethical and financial issues. In particular, with the development of preventive conservation, the conditions for the storage, transport and display of museum artefacts have become more rigorous. Norms and practices are now strictly codified and controlled. Despite the benefits these represent in terms of artefacts’ preservation, they make it almost impossible for some source countries to obtain loans from important Western museums. Wayne Modest discussed that hindrance in a presentation he gave at the UEA, in March 2009. With reference to Jamaican sculptures, he explained how problematic it is to consider that their initial environment is now a danger to them, specifically mentioning the heat and hygrometry levels of Jamaica. Sometimes, the confrontation between some natural environments and the exigency of Western

museums annihilates all efforts from smaller institutions to meet the criteria required for loans. According to Modest this is mostly due to “relationships of power between museums in what are still seen as metropolitan centres and those in the peripheral post-colonies” (Modest 2012:187). Clifford also highlighted such a confrontational repartition of authority over museum collections:

“The organizing structure of the museum-as-collection functions like Pratt's frontier. A center and a periphery are assumed: the center a point of gathering, the periphery an area of discovery. The museum, usually located in a metropolitan city, is the historical destination for the cultural productions it lovingly and authoritatively salvages, cares for, and interprets.” (Clifford 1997:192-193)

However, this is not merely a question of authority and power. The financial stakes cannot be ignored. While the status of the museum artefact changes, its value fluctuates accordingly. From a Western point of view, criteria such as an item's age, rarity and history, and also it being broadly acknowledged as significant, render it more valuable. Grognet also shed light on a recent tendency of Western museums to focus on the heuristic and aesthetical values of ethnographic artefacts (2005). All those standards for judgment contribute to an implicit and variable price for each article. In proportion, the costs for its conservation and insurance, notably if it is transported or loaned, become considerable. The museum which keeps such valuable artefacts has to take such costs in account before it lets them go, even temporarily — and this is without even mentioning its ethical and nearly sacred duty to preserve them. In addition, museums being part of a globalized market economy, most of them seek a return of investment. Unfortunately, places such as Fiji and its national museum have little visibility on the international scene. The publicity they can offer to major international museums is therefore quite limited.

Ethically speaking — and this has some financial and authoritative dimensions too — many museums aspire to act as “contact zones.” They try to render their collections accessible, especially to source community.<sup>4</sup> Here appears a conflict between two international concepts of property: *intellectual* and *cultural* property.

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<sup>4</sup> An alternative term could have been “creator community,” which renders the active role of indigenous actors better (Byrne *et al.* 2011:8). Yet, in the case of this thesis, which focuses on things exchanged in Fiji but not necessarily made there, it seems preferable to keep using “source community,” though this should not be interpreted as a way to undermine Fijian agency, not at all.

In legal terms, an intellectual property is *a work or invention that is the result of creativity, such as a manuscript or a design, to which one has rights and for which one may apply for a patent, copyright, trademark, etc.* (Oxford English Dictionary, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2010). In essence, it can be related to a rather individual conception of property. The rights which apply are those of a single person, or of a restricted group (e.g. author, firm, work group). The spectrum of their application remains quite vague, with variations from country to country. Nonetheless, the notion of intellectual property has been used in recent decades to protect the rights of indigenous people, notably in the exploitation of their cultural heritage and of their natural resources (for examples see Posey & Dutfield 1996). However, to use the sole notion of *intellectual property* can be problematic. It would seem unfair, for example, for a single individual or a limited group to claim rights over a property to which a larger group is connected. In the case of Fijian early artefacts, if we sometimes know to whom they belonged, only few items can be attributed to a specific place of making — and with variable degrees of precision. For instance, the features and designs of *masi* cloth can be connected with given areas of barkcloth making and hypotheses can be formulated about who crafted ivory artefacts in circulation in Fiji in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Clunie 2003a: fig.110, 118, 119 & 124). Yet, in both the cases of *masi* and ivory articles, an individual maker or a restricted group of manufacturers are hardly ever known. In Gell's words (1998), the *recipients* and *prototypes* might be identified, but the *artists* have little chance to be unveiled. Given this, even if the artists were identifiable, this would not be completely relevant in terms of *property*. Indeed, unlike most contemporary works of art, the majority of early artefacts are representative of a broader cultural identity, for they are the products and means of collective *symbolic systems* (Forge 1973). In addition, being circulating artefacts, they no longer necessarily belonged to their original place of making when they were exchanged with a Euro-American partner. And yet over there, they might have been even more valued and significant.

This is where the notion of *cultural property* becomes useful, for it is more flexible and may recognize a larger number of beneficiaries than the concept of *intellectual property*. The first article of *The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1954) defines cultural property as follows:

- “... the term 'cultural property' shall cover, irrespective of origin or ownership:
- (a) movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above;
  - (b) buildings whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a);
  - (c) centers containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as 'centers containing monuments'.”
- (<http://portal.unesco.org>, last consulted 6/7/2013)

With reference to The Hague Convention, the artefacts this thesis examined could be described as *movable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of the people of Fiji*. However, the 1954 convention mainly appeals for the “protection of cultural property,” which “shall comprise the safeguarding of and respect for such property” *in case of conflict* (article 2). It does not aim to guarantee access to such property by its source community. In fact, Clifford referred to *cultural property* as having a rather opposite effect:

“Emerging notions of ‘cultural property’ impinge on abstract assumptions about freedom of ownership. Of course, major museums have never owned their artworks in quite the same way that an individual does. Their collections are held in trust for a wider community—defined as a city, class, caste or elite, nation, or projected global community of high culture. The objects in a museum are often treated as a patrimony, someone's cultural property. But whose?” (Clifford 1997:209-210)

In 1970, UNESCO ratified another convention, the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. This one explicitly aimed to protect the rights of each State over its cultural property, defined as follows:

- “... the term ‘cultural property’ means property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science and which belongs to the following categories:
- (a) Rare collections and specimens of fauna, flora, minerals and anatomy, and objects of palaeontological interest;
  - (b) property relating to history, including the history of science and technology and military and social history, to the life of national leaders, thinkers, scientists and artists and to events of national importance;
  - (c) products of archaeological excavations (including regular and clandestine) or of archaeological discoveries ;
  - (d) elements of artistic or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered;

- (e) antiquities more than one hundred years old, such as inscriptions, coins and engraved seals;
  - (f) objects of ethnological interest;
  - (g) property of artistic interest, such as:
    - (i) pictures, paintings and drawings produced entirely by hand on any support and in any material (excluding industrial designs and manufactured articles decorated by hand);
    - (ii) original works of statuary art and sculpture in any material;
    - (iii) original engravings, prints and lithographs ;
    - (iv) original artistic assemblages and montages in any material;
  - (h) rare manuscripts and incunabula, old books, documents and publications of special interest (historical, artistic, scientific, literary, etc.) singly or in collections;
  - (i) postage, revenue and similar stamps, singly or in collections;
  - (j) archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives;
  - (k) articles of furniture more than one hundred years old and old musical instruments.”
- (<http://portal.unesco.org>, last consulted 6/7/2013)

Again, early museum artefacts from Fiji could enter in the above definition of *cultural property*, with an important restriction as they were exported long before the ratification of this convention, which, in addition, mostly targets acts of *negative reciprocity* (chapter 1). Such limitations are among the “weaknesses” that Posey and Dutfield listed for this convention (1996:115).

In each of the above definitions, the notion of property is problematic, even inappropriate, in the case of early museum artefacts from Fiji, because property is defined as a definitive and permanent state. In that perspective, transfers of property become crucial, dramatic steps, as if there was no return possible except for similar decisive and violent acts of detachment. We are far from the smooth and circulating conception of objects evoked in the first part of this chapter. This could be called a *cultural shock*. In fact, it is possible that the Western visitor of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and their Fijian partners encountered a similar incomprehension. The former would have taken exchanged things as definitive gifts, while the latter would have expected on-going relations and a continuous flow of merchandise.

To summarize, museums and international organisations such as UNESCO look at museum artefacts as property in a very Western and quite dual way. Do they belong to their sources community, and especially to their makers, or are they legally owned by their institutions of keeping? In the case of Fijian artefacts anterior to 1855, both proposals are disputable. In the former case, it would be complicated to identify a unique group of origin with a sufficient degree of certainty, and moreover one or several

artist(s). In addition, even if such individuals could be designated with accuracy, this could not be entirely relevant in terms of *property*, for early artefacts circulated broadly within Fiji and beyond. In fact, a number of Fijian early *iyau* were made in Tonga, Samoa, or by foreign craftsmen settled in Fiji, and they were by nature objects of exchange. Although it may seem completely legitimate to the history of the artefacts, the second posture has some limits too. Regarding museum items as the sole property of holding institutions contradicts the initial agency of artefacts, in essence circulating ones. One could say, however, that this is for the greater good, for Western institutions preserved things that would have disappeared otherwise, and still would if they were returned to their country of origin. Yet, even in that case, it would still be ethically problematic to restrict access to artefacts by the people for whom they are *cultural property*.

Clifford discussed such conflicts of interests as “linear teleology” (Clifford 1997:211). And yet:

“In contact zones, cultural appropriations are always political and contestable, cross-cut by other appropriations, actual or potential... Objects of value cross from a tribal world to a museum world as a result of political, economic, and intercultural relations that are not permanent.” (Clifford 1997:211)

In the case of early artefacts from Fiji, the on-going exchange relations that brought them to Europe or America came to an end. Consequently, the artefacts began to belong to their sole places of keeping instead of being active, circulating agents of a shared history between Fiji and the West (see Byrne *et al.* 2011:19). The problem of thinking about this in terms of *property* is that the solution can only be a drastic one: whether the artefact remains the property of their holding institution, or whether that property should be transferred to its source community under the form of a formal restitution or repatriation — which in some cases is relevant and necessary. As Clifford summarized:

“Repatriation of tribal works is not the only proper response to contact histories, relations which cannot always be reduced to colonial oppression and appropriation. But it is a possible, appropriate route.” (Clifford 1997:211)

If some requests for restitution were formally made in the 1980s, mostly by Fergus Clunie who chiefly targeted pieces lacked by the FM, it seems it is not the case anymore. In fact, the lack of space, staff and material means of the FM would render a massive restitution problematic (Sagale Buadromo, personal communication 2010). This given, the FM actively campaigns in favour of greater access to foreign collections

for the people of Fiji. In this quest, a better knowledge of early collections is especially sought. Pre-colonial and early colonial exchanges are little represented at FM. In contrast, the FM's collection is rather exhaustive for transactions from 1900 on, with about 30.000 items, including photographs, archival documents and books (Buadromo, Cambridge, 7th June 2013). Thus, foreign and Fijian collections are complementary; and they could advantageously enhance each other via comparisons if they were circulating.

### Virtual circulation

The previous discussion has pleaded in favour of a museum acting as a place of exchange, as well as for a physical circulation of early artefacts from Fiji. Now, given the conservation and financial issues raised, it could be useful to consider alternative(s).

#### *Internet as "contact zone," assets and limits*

In the modern era of new technologies, in which museum collections are being more and more digitalized, Gere described the Internet as a powerful extension to Clifford's model of "contact zones:"

"Here also the term contact zone seems appropriate. Rather than denoting the contact between collectors and collected, in this context it can denote the contact between people, culture and communities. No longer at the center, broadcasting knowledge outwards, the museum can be seen as a node in a network of interactive relations, where culture, communities and people can meet and exchange ideas." (Gere 1997:62)

This concluding chapter will now look in that direction. Virtual platforms seem to have the assets to overcome major issues of the concrete circulation of museum objects, including the Western fear of expropriation. Practically, Internet allows an extended contextualization of museum collections through various media; and *a priori* it prevails over the actual museum in terms of financial costs, exhibition space and visitors' range. In Gell's words (1998), the circulation of *indexical forms* rather than material objects is a colossal bonus in terms of conservation. More importantly, the Web is a remarkable platform for the diffusion of knowledge and intellectual exchanges. This could suit the didactic mission of museums as well as their need for feedback. Finally, Internet assures the transition between what Gere described as a one-way form of communication, which implied a unique provider of information (the museum) and a limited number of



recipients (its visitors), towards a more globalized exchange, dynamic and interactive, between the museum and a considerably extended audience:

“The Internet seems to be precisely the emancipatory reciprocal mass medium dreamt of by Hans Magnus Enzensburger. As well as the practical opportunities made possible by its existence it also offers a powerful model of communication and knowledge dissemination... As a network of decentralized communication it counters the centralized and hierarchical model of knowledge dissemination the museum represents. But it also presents an opportunity for the museum to be rethought in ways that may be more appropriate to this postmodern, post-colonial age.” (Gere 1997:61)

Therefore, virtual circulation appears as a pertinent alternative to concrete movements of museums objects, notably in the case of ethnographic collections aiming to a better understanding of faraway cultures and to a more comprehensive exchange with Extra-occidental peoples.

Legally and ethically, the tool seems equally interesting. For the vast majority of museum items, a virtual diffusion would guarantee, it seems, everyone’s right to access their cultural property, though indiscriminate access can cause problems (see below). In theory, the holding institution or holding country remain the material owner of objects, and still benefit from their exploitation, including copyrights. The source community members can virtually exercise their right of intellectual property and reconnect with their patrimony more easily. And of course, this should ease collaboration between the two parties. In the case of early artefacts for Fiji, it would be a way to putting them back into circulation, reconnecting them with their original nature as exchanged objects.

Often museums are reluctant to see their collections widely accessible, especially in a virtual space that could be perceived as a rival if we allude to Gere’s definition of the museum as “a place of visual consumption” (1997:60). The circulation of digital pictures may keep potential visitors away. However, attention could also be drawn on the complementary tandem formed by the two entities. Indeed, the virtual interface may help to prepare and complete the visit rather than replace it. Nevertheless, digital images can also endanger the commercial profitability of other indexical forms, such as printed catalogues, etc. This partially explains the important protection of online pictures and the heavy legal and technical background that frames their diffusion.

Source communities could also contest online circulation, especially of pieces judged *highly sensitive* due to their intrinsic or symbolic nature. It would be the case of human remains or sacred objects, for instance. For those, inappropriate virtual

circulation could rather be a step backward when compared with the carefully channelled and restricted circulation allowed within museums. The last point sheds light on the strong ethical position that museums must take, as well as on the careful selection that is necessary, before appropriate objects are allowed to circulate on the Web. Interestingly, it seems that both requirements imply an on-going communication between museums and source communities.

By chance, in the case of Fijian early items, such issues are rather marginal. To date, the main priority is access to artefacts kept outside Fiji. Here again, an example from 2010 might help. During that year, I presented the project of a virtual circulation of early artefacts from Fiji twice. The first time was at the Pacific Arts Association (PAA) conference at Rarotonga (Cook Islands), in August. The second time, in September, was during the general assembly of the Pacific Islands Museum Association (PIMA) in Koné (New Caledonia). Both times I received positive feedback regarding the idea of a circulating nature of early museum artefacts, especially from Pacific islanders. The second time, however, M. Abong, director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, raised the issue of possible secrecy attached to some artefacts. This is a significant problem for a number of Vanuatu items. These are associated with specific levels of initiation and traditionally are not disclosed to non-initiates. It was Sagale Buadromo who answered him. Her answer was that, unlike in Vanuatu, secrecy was not a current concern in Fiji. Really, she said, what mattered at this point was access to foreign collections. In fact, the previous chapters demonstrated that even sacred and religious objects could be exchanged quite freely in the early times of Fiji-West contacts, even if this could actually mean they had lost some of their *tabu* dimension.

It, nonetheless, seems good to keep in mind that some artefacts may be regarded as more sensitive than others. It is important to remain receptive to possible restrictions. Also, it seems pertinent at this point to remember that some items could be judged inappropriate to display without a strong effort of contextualization. This is notably the case of Fijian artefacts connected with former cannibalism. Nowadays, those tend to thrill both the Western and Fijian audience.

Finally, all of what preceded has implied that members of source communities — in our case Fijians — are connected to the Internet. Without that *sine qua none* condition, the virtual circulation of museum objects would lose most of its intellectual

and ethical relevance. It could even become a dangerous illusion or a simulacra (Oguibe 2002:179), being just another privilege of the Western bourgeois intelligentsia (Gere 1997:64), and a post-colonial fantasy of recovered balance. The Internet remains barely accessible in many parts of the world where the necessary equipment and skills are either missing or very expensive. As Quayson and Goldberg put it:

“The brutal fact is that the Net is actually leading to a new epoch of the economic marginalization of those who may not be able to benefit from the secondary development that connectivity brings with it.” (Quayson and Goldberg 2002:xv)

In Fiji, however, the use of Internet has been increasing noticeably over the last few years — mostly in the capital, Suva. In 1997, there were only 1.800 recorded Internet users in Fiji (c. 0.2%; Ogden 1999:454), but in 2011, 9.7% of the 931,000 population were connected to the Web (Harorimana and al. 2012: abstract). From my own observation, most people access Internet at work in Suva. This implies few personal subscriptions to date, but a rapid development of professional connections. Furthermore, one has to envisage the future. The current situation presages a significant expansion of the Internet, parallel to that of wealthier countries who have business interests in Fiji. These include Australia, New Zealand and China for instance. Moreover, this chapter has already referred to the connectivity of Fijian people outside Fiji, notably interested in what is said of their home country on the Web. For instance, in his studies of political blogs on Fiji, Crosbie showed that most blog-readers are located in Fiji or in countries with significant Fijian immigration (2010:158). The other people interested in Fiji, including in its arts and museums, are tourists. Early, the national institutions of Fiji invested in the Web. Thus, “in August 1996, the Fiji Visitors Bureau was the first in the Pacific with its own home page <<http://www.fijifvb.gov.fj/>>...” (Ogden 1999:456).

### *The Fiji Museum, a key exchange partner*

Of particular interest to us, the Fiji Museum has had a web page since the late 1990s. This one was developed with the help of the American designer Mara J. Fulmer, temporary based at the University of South Pacific in Suva in the mid-1990s. She described her work and approach on her own website:

“Since moving back to the USA in July 1997, I have continued my work with the Fiji Museum helping them build bridges across cultures, increase appreciation for heritage and shared community, and of course, raise much needed funds. This work has included creating several special fundraising calendars featuring multicultural images relating to

the Pacific Islands and the development of a website.”

(<http://www.lookinglassdesign.com/fmdesignplan/fmdesignplan.html>, last consulted 11/7/2013)

Looking at the FM’s website, the home page reads:

“The aim of this website is to encourage the understanding and accessibility of information on the history of Fiji and the surrounding South Pacific region.

It is also meant to bring you more current information about related research and activities of the museum staff and visitors.” (<http://www.fijimuseum.org.fj/index.html>, last consulted 11/7/2013)

Thus, the FM’s website serves to promote the institution as well as to document and extend dissemination of knowledge. It allows a virtual visit of the museum’s galleries, via a slideshow. In the same vein, since April 2011, the FM has had a very active Facebook® page. That one is being frequently updated — almost daily during week days — and notably used to share documents such as old photographs and the news of forthcoming events. To date, over 3600 people “like” it (<https://www.facebook.com/fijimuseum?sk=wall>, last consulted 21/7/2013).

It is also a virtual platform that has resulted from the collaboration between the Museum Victoria of Melbourne and the FM. That explicitly aims at “presenting artefacts from the world class collection at Museum Victoria. Reproductions of historical images from Fiji Museum’s impressive collection add cultural and historical meaning to the objects” (<http://museumvictoria.com.au/fiji/about.aspx>, last consulted 11/7/2013).

Thus, the Fiji Museum appears as a key partner in the project of a virtual circulation of early collections from Fiji. Previous experiences, such as the above-mentioned space on Museum Victoria’s website and FM’s online windows, suggest that such a circulation is possible, as well as the international collaboration that enhances it.

However, even though we have seen that the FM was gradually becoming more relevant to the Fijian community, one could question its representativeness in Fiji. As in other institutions, its decisions and methods are under the control of a few individuals. The board of trustees includes members from the Department of National Heritage, Culture and the Arts, Suva City Council, the Ministry of Education and the business community (FM website). Clifford already evoked this problem, concluding:

“Neither community ‘experience’ nor curatorial ‘authority’ has an automatic right to the contextualization of collections or to the narration of contact histories. The solution is inevitably contingent and political: a matter of mobilized power, of negotiation, of representation constrained by specific audiences.” (Clifford 1997:209)

In other words, all situations require a high degree of adaptability. Does the Internet offers a more neutral space? At any rate, it is one asset of the Web to favour extended intellectual transactions. Any tool that should allow the virtual circulation of early museum artefacts from Fiji (e.g. online database, website) should therefore be thought as flexible, upgradable, and most importantly opened to a constructive form of criticism. In that perspective, the FM offers an entry point to what should ideally become an extended exchange between holding institutions, researchers and the people of Fiji.

Moreover, it seems that such a partnership could benefit all three parties. If they were to combine their knowledge, this could lead to an improved documentation of existing collections and to better management of them in their current locations. Online transactions would thus answer Clunie's wish, expressed in the early 1980s:

"It has, in short, become overwhelmingly apparent that the Fiji Museum needs, and has indeed long needed, to assemble as large and as detailed as practicable a collection of this foreign-held information, it clearly being absurd to expect ourselves and other serious local scholars of Fiji's past to be able to spend months, years, and other people's fortunes gadding about the world seeing things at first hand virtually every time we begin to research a fresh topic." (Clunie 1982a:1)

### *Indexical forms versus concrete artefacts*

A last issue must be addressed, the image is not the object. Moreover, the virtual diffusion of images, and of other indexical emanations of objects (e.g. textual descriptions, sketches), is not a circulation *per se*. The artefacts themselves remain immobile. At this point it seems therefore essential to specify that, by no means does this thesis suggest that digital images could be substituted for concrete objects. It was stressed in chapter 1 that material artefacts are the very object of this thesis, as well as its limit and means. Now, even beyond the question of a picture's accuracy — and that is a real difficulty that should not be underestimated since we have all been fooled by pictures in which items looked bigger, redder, etc. — the difference between index and prototype (Gell 1998) is crucial. As Quayson and Goldberg put it: "Materiality is still the end of the virtual highway" (2002:xiv).



6.1— *La Trahison des Images*, by René Magritte, Art Institute of Chicago. Oil on canvas, 62 x 81 cm, painted in 1929

Without going into details here, as this is not our purpose, it seems good to remember that for centuries artists and philosophers have questioned the status of images. Since 1929, René Magritte's masterpiece *La trahison des images* (the images' treason), better known through the sentence *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (This is not a pipe), has embodied the risk of a confusion between what is represented and its representation. During the twentieth century, the value of the image's production and reproduction was specifically interrogated with regards to the mere process of artistic creation. For the purpose of this thesis, Forge (1973) and Gell (1998) provide key insights in that direction. Forge looked at the image as an outcome of a whole symbolic system and as a mode of non-verbal communication. Gell explained that any work of art is shaped by a combination of agencies, exerted via the index that reflects them (see chapter 1). Like the artefacts themselves, digital photographs enter in Gell's definition of index. They too refer to *prototypes* (the artefacts). They relay the *agency* of an *artist* (photographer), credited for his or her work. And such artists target specific *recipients*, such as the museums for which they work, the researchers and the general public who will look at the photographs. Thus, the photographs too may be regarded as non-verbal ways to convey ideas about artefacts. They reflect specific codes which dictate their general allure as well as their scope of action.

Here, a new issue of translation emerges. The pictures themselves, along with their interpretation, are likely to vary according to the artists and recipients at play. It is probable that a Fijian tourist, a European researcher or a professional museum photographer would not picture a *yaqona* bowl in the same way. In the Musée du quai Branly's online catalogue (<http://www.quaibranly.fr/fr/documentation/le-catalogue-des-objets.html>, last consulted 21/7/2013), for instance, a number of Fijian *tanoa* are shown sideways, from above. From that point of view, the general allure of the dish is emphasized. The lug, however, is little or not visible. Yet, from a Fijian perspective, the lug would be an important part of the bowl. That is where the sacred cord (*watabu*) is attached, facing the most important guest of the *yaqona* circle on a ceremonial occasion. A Fijian photographer would probably want to show it. A researcher, on the other hand, might focus on rim thickness, lug shape, and so on (Boissonnas, conference paper, Cambridge 8th June 2013). His photographs reflect his agency.



6.2— 72.84.346 and 72.56.736 as shown on MQB's website (21th July 2013)

These comments are not meant to be critical. The point here is to emphasize that, as in the case of an actual display of artefacts, the agencies at play are crucial. They determine what is shown and how it is shown. Furthermore, one should always remember that databases are classification systems. They rely on set-up categories and thesauruses, themselves dependent on their cultural background of emergence and on the database's given purposes. Put another way, the virtual circulation — or display — of artefacts, is related to a variety of agencies, and therefore subject to complex issues of cultural translation. Again, cross-cultural cooperation might help with such a hindrance,



for collaboration brings collections alive. Put another way, it allows artefacts to keep exerting an agency of their own (Byrne *et al.* 2011:19).

The difference between indexes and prototypes is particularly striking in the case of “sensitive objects.” In essence, their materiality prevails, and this cannot be rendered virtually. That undermines the idea of “virtual repatriation,” sometimes evoked as an alternative to actual restitution. As I rhetorically asked elsewhere (PAA international conference, August 2010, Rarotonga): “What is the picture of a Maori tattooed head, or that of an Aboriginal *churinga*? Certainly, it is not a *churinga*.” Similarly in Fiji, what would be the image of a *tabua* in comparison with the *tabua* itself? It could not be exchanged during a wedding, nor could it provide its solemn dimension to the spokesman’s discourse. The image is not the object. At best, it is an index (Gell 1998) of the object, fixed at a given moment of its social life (Appadurai 1986), with specific agencies at play.

The above restrictions narrow the possible role of virtual circulation. Clearly, it can be an interesting alternative to *some* movements and a powerful *complement* to others, but it could hardly ever become a substitute for concrete circulations. In other words, it should remain a middle step, a moment within a broader process of circulation, initiated centuries ago and hopefully on-going. Still, this thesis argues in favour of a virtual circulation of early museum objects from Fiji now, since this would make a lot of sense in terms of historical continuity and because it could equally benefit museums, researchers and the general public — in Fiji and overseas. I hope this could also favour a number of translations, tangible and intellectual ones, in the future.

Finally, the preceding applies mainly to the case of Fijian early ethnographic collections. It might not work for other areas and times, for instance where museum collections are connected to violent interactions and are regarded as stigmata of colonial abuses. Is the model here proposed transferable? It is not our purpose to say. At any rate, the idea of ethnographic objects being exchanged and circulating objects again seems worth exploring, especially in the case of early museum collections from the Pacific.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this research, a database was built. With regards to this chapter’s content, this device was conceived as a website. Although it has only been managed locally to date, this would allow an easy transfer to an online version on the web. Files extracted from this database will be found in an appendix in volume II.

## Glossary of Fijian Terms

### B

<i>Balabala</i>	tree fern
<i>Balavu</i>	adj. long
<i>Balevo</i>	simple canoe, with single husk and not outrigger, occasionally used on rivers, in coastal areas and around small islands  the shape of some wooden <i>yaqona</i> bowls, with pointed ends, is sometimes compared to it
<i>Bati</i>	warrior  tooth
<i>Beka</i>	fruit eating bat, especially the large flying-fox
<i>Bete</i>	priests from old times; this word is still employed by the Catholic Church of Fiji to designate its pastors, while the Protestant Churches use preferably the word <i>talatala</i> (i.e. missionary)
<i>Bibi</i>	heavy; metaphorically significant in meaning, with considerable implications
<i>Bilo</i>	cup, usually made of half a coconut shell, used to drink <i>yaqona</i> . Now a glass as well
<i>Bitu</i>	bamboo
<i>Bituucu</i>	lit. the bamboo used with/on the nose, the nose flute
<i>Bokola</i>	human body, for cannibal consumption
<i>Bowai</i>	clubs that resembles a baseball bat, <i>povai</i> in Tongan
<i>Buli</i>	cowry shell and by extension rounded things
<i>Bulibuli</i>	heavy clubs with a rounded conical head, covered with many knobs in medium relief
<i>Bulikula</i>	golden cowry ( <i>Cypraea aurantium</i> ), chiefly symbol
<i>Bulileka</i>	small cowry shell ( <i>Ovula costellata</i> ), found on prestigious neck ornaments such as <i>vorovoro</i> necklaces (Clunie 2003a: fig.105)
<i>Bulivula/bulidina</i>	white cowry ( <i>Ovula ovum</i> ), chiefly symbol
<i>Bulumakau</i>	cow
<i>Burau</i>	drinking of <i>yaqona</i> by sucking it from shallow containers, especially the ritual drinking, formerly reserved to priests ( <i>bete</i> ), which usually involved specific wooden or clay dishes (see below)
<i>lburauburau</i>	dishes used for the priestly consumption of <i>yaqona</i> during <i>burau</i> ritual
<i>Bure</i>	solid house for collective use, by contrast with <i>vale</i>
<i>Burekalou</i>	lit. the house of the god, temple

### C

<i>Cali</i> (or <i>sali</i> )	type of two-handed club, usually described as “gunstock” clubs in museum because of its general shape that reminds a musket, with a pointed beak on one side and a triangular blade on the other.
<i>Cava</i>	<i>Conus marmoreus</i> shell, previously used as a <i>tabua</i> on coastal area, like whale’s teeth nowadays

<i>Civa</i>	Pearl-oyster ( <i>Pictnada margaretifera</i> ); once polished it was usually worn as breast pendant by Fijians of old times, sometimes combined with other valued material, like ivory.
<i>Civavonovono</i>	composite breastplate, usually made of a <i>civa</i> pearlshell, overlaid ( <i>vonovono</i> ) with ivory
<i>Civatabua</i>	breastplate made in the shape of <i>civa</i> pectorals, but in ivory ( <i>tabua</i> )
<i>Coi</i>	complementary food, which accompany <i>na kakana dina</i> in Fijian meal; relish. It usually comprised some animal flesh and green leaves
<i>Colo</i>	mountain areas of Vitilevu
<i>Kaicolo</i>	mountaineers
<i>Cula</i>	vb. to pierce
<i>Icula</i>	fork, sometime needle
<i>Iculanibokola</i>	ritual instrument used by priests and chiefs to consume <i>tabu</i> food, including human flesh but not only. Often described in museum as “cannibal fork”.
<i>Culacula</i>	Fijian two-handed club type, often described as “paddle club” in museums
<b>D</b>	
<i>Dakai</i>	bow, and by extension gun
<i>Dakua</i>	forest tree of Fiji ( <i>Agathis macrophylla</i> ) from which the <i>makarde</i> resin is extracted
<i>Damudamu</i>	adj. red, from brownish red to orange
<i>Dari</i>	simple bowl made of clay or wood, for food or, formerly, hair dye
<i>Dau</i>	expert (in)
<i>Dauveimaroroi</i>	protector, the one who keeps
<i>Dauveitaqomaki</i>	defender
<i>Dave</i>	platter
<i>Daveniyaqona</i>	platter used for the consumption of <i>yaqona</i>
<i>Davui</i>	<i>Charonia tritonis</i> shell, by extension the conch from which it is made
<i>Dina</i>	adj. true, real
<i>Diridamu</i>	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> , vine whose red and black seeds were formerly used in necklaces and on other objects, notably miniature <i>burekalou</i> and rattles. Syn. <i>leredamu</i>
<i>Dri</i>	bêche-de-mer, with many subspecies (see Gatty 2009:72)
<i>Droka</i>	raw, unfinished, green (that has not come to maturity yet). The adjective applies to a lot of things, including <i>masi</i> cloth that has not be painted yet, untransformed whale’s teeth etc. This is of particular interest regarding the symbolic value of raw and cooked things, examined by Sahlins (1983).
<i>Drokadroka</i>	green (colour)
<i>Drua</i>	double canoe
<b>G</b>	
<i>Gadi</i>	pole-like club (weapon)
<i>Gadregadre</i>	Fijian barbed spear, where barbs are frequently underlined by <i>magimagi</i> lashing (cf. Clunie 2003b: fig.26, p.160 & 162)
<i>Gadro</i>	distinguished club ( <i>iwau</i> ) after it had killed, in old times (see Tippet 1968:66)

<i>Gasau</i>	reed; by extension arrow and by further extension, bullet (of firearms)
<i>Gata</i>	snake, and by extension a club that show a strong inflexion towards the head and a quite small spur (cf. Clunie 2003b: fig.1-3)
<i>Gatu</i>	barkcloth from Western Polynesia
<i>Gatu vakaviti</i>	barkcloth that combines features from Western Polynesia (esp. Tonga) and typically Fijian stencilled designs
<i>Gonedau</i>	kin-group of experts fishermen/hunters, serving a chief and specialized in providing food for chiefly consumption, notably turtle and <i>bokola</i>
<i>Gugu</i>	priest's club, syn. <i>Siriti</i> (Clunie 2003b)
<b>I</b>	
<i>Ibe</i>	mat
<i>Ika</i>	fish
<i>Ikatamata</i>	lit. human fish, a metaphor used for turtles
<i>Iri</i>	fan
<i>Iroi</i>	flywhisk
<b>K</b>	
<i>Kai</i>	prefix. native, countryman
<i>Kai Valagi</i>	Whites, Europeans, Americans
<i>Kai Viti</i>	Fijian
<i>Kaka</i>	spear, with rather angular and short barbs, maybe inspired from the beak of the <i>kaka</i> parrot (Clunie 1977, fig.29h, p.164 &166)
<i>Kana</i>	vb. to eat
<i>Kakana</i>	Food
<i>Kakana dina</i>	literally "true" food, usually starchy part of each meal, made of tubercles
<i>Kali</i>	headrest
<i>Kalou</i>	God, spirit
<i>Kalouvu</i>	Ancestor god
<i>Karakarawa</i>	blue (colour)
<i>Kato</i>	a basket with angular edges, now also a box
<i>Katomosikaka</i>	finely woven bag of coconut palm spathe fibres of Tongan origin. Its typical diagonal patterns in two colours are highlighted with shell beads. Such baskets were acquired by Westerners in Tonga from the late 1770s (see Kaeppler 1978a, 2009). Some specimens exist in the the Wilkes collection (SI, NMNH) and one old example can be found in the small Lyth collection now in Cambridge (Herle & Carreau 2013:18 ; fig.2.20)
<i>Kere (kerea, kerei)</i>	to ask for
<i>Kerekere</i>	the action of asking for ( <i>kerea</i> ) something needed (see Sahlins 1992; 1962:203-214) Today, the closest translation of "please"
<i>Kesa</i>	a pigment used to decorate <i>masi</i> -cloth (notably), and by extension the paint, to paint and painted. For example, the <i>masikesa</i> is the stained bark-cloth.

<i>Kiakavo</i>	dance club, without sharp edges and whose end presents an non-functional angle for a weapon
<i>Kinikini</i>	large paddle-shaped war club
<i>Koro</i>	village
<i>Kula</i>	n. red parakeet and by extension its feathers adj. red, like the feathers of the <i>kula</i> bird, but also unsurpassed, like their beauty (Capell 1941:123) highly coloured (blue, red) (Gatty 2009:124)
<i>Kuvu</i>	dust, smoke
<i>Masi kuvui</i>	dark brown <i>masi</i> associated with chiefly rank
<b>L</b>	
<i>Lali</i>	slit gong, drum
<i>Leba</i>	kind of small tree ( <i>Eugenia neurocalyx</i> ), whose flowers are used as perfume and on garland worn around the neck and shoulders ( <i>salusalu</i> )
<i>Lekaleka</i>	adj. short
<i>Levu</i>	big
<i>Lotu</i>	Christian religion; vb. To become a Christian
<i>Liku</i>	native skirt, formerly worn by women
<i>Likutaria</i>	woman's skirt made of <i>taria</i> swamp sedges
<i>Likuvau</i>	woman's skirt made of <i>vau</i> (inner bark of the <i>Hibiscus</i> )
<b>M</b>	
<i>Madua</i>	shame
<i>Magimagi</i>	coconut coir sennit; inner fibres of the husk, usually assembled in a twisted or braided cord, used to mend things together or in decorative lashing
<i>Magiti</i>	feast
<i>Makarde</i>	resin used to varnish Fijian earth pots, extracted from <i>Dakua</i> tree
<i>Malo</i>	Polynesian, loin cloth
<i>Maloyara</i>	dangling part of the <i>malo</i> , whose length was indicative of the wearer's rank. The longer they were, the higher in rank the individual was.
<i>Mana</i>	efficiency, effectiveness; spiritual or supernatural power
<i>Masi</i>	bark-cloth  cultivated mulberry scrub ( <i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i> ), from which the inner bark is used in the making of <i>masi</i> cloth
<i>Masima</i>	salt
<i>Katonimasima</i>	lit. basket for the salt. Bottle-shape basket, used to transport and present salt. Syn. <i>Tabanimasima</i> (lit. bottle for the salt)
<i>Mata</i>	eye, face
<i>Matai</i>	expert, especially a specialized craftsman like a canoe builder
<i>Matakau</i>	ancestor figure, from <i>burekalou</i>

<i>Mataki</i>	ambassador, usually followed by the name of the place where the person in question is ambassador to, e.g. <i>matakibau</i> , the ambassador to Bau
<i>Matakilagi</i>	chiefly staff, in pre-Christian times
<i>Matanitu</i>	formerly, political unit, i.e. chiefdom/kingdom. Since the Cession (1874), the “state” as it is under the authority of a government.
<i>Matanivanua</i>	representative of a <i>vanua</i> (land) and chief ( <i>turaga</i> ). He is notably the chief’s spokesman in ceremonial occasions
<i>Mataqali</i>	clan
<i>Matau</i>	adze, and especially the adze’s blade
<i>Matauvatu</i>	stone bladed adze
<i>Matavulo</i>	lit. face made of <i>vulo</i> , a facial mask made of coconut phloem (cf. Clunie & Ligairi 1983)
<i>Meke</i>	dance
<i>Mekevau</i>	club dance
<i>iMilamila</i>	scratcher, hair pin
<i>Moli</i>	citrus fruits
<b>N</b>	
<i>Nokonoko</i>	iron wood and tree ( <i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> )
<i>Nuku</i>	sand, and by assimilation, gun powder
<i>Saqaninuku</i>	lit. the container ( <i>saqa</i> ) for the sand ( <i>nuku</i> ), in our case the powder horn
<b>Q</b>	
<i>Qato</i>	armlet, armband, bracelet
<b>R</b>	
<i>Ratu</i>	title of chiefly rank, and respectful address
<i>Rerega</i>	turmeric
<i>Roga</i>	<i>Pipturus argenteus</i> , inner bark used in the making of cords to which precious materials are strung into prestigious ornaments
<i>Rubu</i>	satchel-like basket, made of pandanus ( <i>voivoi</i> ) fibres
<b>S</b>	
<i>Saisai</i>	multi-pronged spear
<i>Sala</i>	vb. to wrap
<i>iSala</i>	turban, made of fine <i>masi</i> cloth, that used to be worn on the head by men of chiefly rank
<i>Saqa</i>	drinking pottery, usually varnished by the mean of a vegetable resin ( <i>makarde</i> ), extracted from <i>dakua</i> trees
<i>Saqamoli</i>	multi-lobed pot, whose lobes are evocative of citrus fruits ( <i>moli</i> )
<i>Sasa</i>	mid rib of coconut palms, use by Fijian and Western Polynesian islanders to make combs, or as stylus to decorate barkcloths
<i>Saulaca</i>	sail needles, formerly made of human bones
<i>Sedre</i>	dish or bowl

<i>Seni</i>	flower
<i>Senivutu</i>	rosette designs, found on many Fijian traditional objects, as well as in Western Polynesia. It for instance decorates <i>masi</i> cloths, and in the past was found on some clubs, like <i>kinikini</i>
<i>iSeru</i>	combs
<i>iSeru balabala</i>	wooden combs, some of which are made from tree fern ( <i>balabala</i> ) wood
<i>iSeru sasa</i>	Tongan like combs, made of mid-ribs of coconut palm, lashed together by the mean of a usually very fine <i>magimagi</i>
<i>iSevu</i>	first fruits and related ceremony, where the first crops where presented to the chief and priest, now to the church
<i>Sici</i>	<i>Trochus niloticus</i> shell, formerly used in the making of armbands and other ornaments
<i>Sila</i>	Job's tears ( <i>Coix Lacryma Jobi</i> ). The seeds could be consumed as a snack and their hard shells could be found in necklaces and on other artefacts such as miniature <i>bure kalou</i>
<i>Siriti</i>	priest's club, syn. <i>gugu</i>
<i>iSivi</i>	spade or shovel, whose spade was previously made out of turtle-shell, now from shells, usually <i>vasua</i>
<i>Solevu</i>	ceremonial exchange. According to Capell (1941:235): "a large gathering of people for the ceremonial exchange of food, etc., with feasting on <i>magiti</i> ."
<i>iSoro</i>	Ritual and formal apology, reconciliation, or request
<i>Sovui</i>	<i>Spondylus</i> shell, formerly worn as a neck ornament, especially by people of high rank
<i>Sui-na</i>	bone, for example <i>suinagata</i> = snake's bone
<b>T</b>	
<i>Tabu</i>	adj. marked, set apart, forbidden and by extension sacred (modern meaning)
<i>Tabua</i>	extremely valued trade item, now usually made of a polished whale's tooth, pierced at both ends and suspended to a cord of plaited <i>magimagi</i> . It seems that it could be previously been made out of other material, including shells, wood and stones.  by extension, ivory and especially sperm whale's teeth
<i>Tabuadamu</i>	"red <i>tabua</i> ," the <i>tabua</i> is rendered for ritual purpose from being anointed and smoked
<i>Vonotabua</i>	adj. inlaid or overlaid with ivory (notably clubs, <i>kali</i> )
<i>Tagane</i>	boy, male
<i>Taku</i>	hawksbill turtle
<i>Talatala</i>	from <i>tala</i> (to send), literally the one or the thing which has been send, by extension the missionary and nowadays the Protestant pastor
<i>Tamata</i>	human being, especially male
<i>Tanoa</i>	<i>yaqona</i> bowl, as it was found and made in Lau, and then exported to other parts of Fiji and Western Polynesia
<i>Taria</i>	<i>Eleocharis</i> swamp sedges, sometimes used in the making of <i>liku</i> skirts
<i>iTaube</i>	necklace, garland, neck-ornament
<i>iTaukei</i>	native of the land
<i>Tavako</i>	tobacco



<i>Tavatava</i>	series of cut, including medical incisions (Gatty 2009, p.255) and zigzag designs in carving
<i>Tavuto</i>	whale
<i>Batinitavuto</i>	lit. whale's tooth (raw material)
<i>Tikau</i>	Fijian spear (cf. Clunie 2003b: fig.31, p.168-169)
<i>Titoko</i>	walking stick, comparable to European walking cane
<i>Tobe</i>	ringlet of hair, worn at the back of the head, and also found at the back of some wigs ( <i>ulumate</i> ) where they are indicative of high ranks
<i>iTokatoka</i>	family unit
<i>Totokia</i>	battle-hammer, two handed club with a head serrated with numerous knobs, perhaps an evocation of the pandanus fruit, and a pointed beak
<i>iTuki</i>	Probably the ancestor of the <i>totokia</i> club, similar patterns except for the beak, here shorter or not existent
<i>Turaga</i>	chief, king, person of authority
<i>Turagalevu</i>	paramount chief
<i>Vakaturaqa</i>	chiefly
<b>U</b>	
<i>iUla</i>	throwing club. Many variants existed.
<i>iUla drisia</i>	<i>iula</i> with a plain spherical head
<i>iUla kitu</i>	<i>iula</i> with a plain pointed head, evocative of a coconut water container ( <i>kitu</i> )
<i>iUla tavatava</i>	throwing club with carved knobs or serrations around its head
<i>Ulu</i>	head
<i>Ulucavu</i>	lit. adorned head, headdresses, notably wigs (Clunie 1982b)
<i>Ulumate</i>	lit. the sick head, in fact the wig that used to cover the head lacking hair, subsequently to mourning sacrifices or natural baldness
<i>Uto</i>	breadfruit
<b>V</b>	
<i>Vale</i>	house
<i>Valeniyayamaroroi</i>	museum (the place where things are kept)
<i>Vakamau</i>	wedding ceremonies
<i>Vakataraisulu</i>	mourning lifting ceremonies
<i>Vanua</i>	the land, and by extension its people. A local social unit, opposed to that of <i>turaga</i> in dual perceptions of Fijian structures
<i>Vasu</i>	the sister's son, the uterine nephew who owns specific rights on his mother side, the extent of which depends on his rank
<i>Vasuitaukei</i>	lit. autochthon <i>vasu</i> . The son of a local woman, and a foreign father, residing on his mother's <i>vanua</i> ; especially the local son of a "Stranger King" (Sahlins 1985)
<i>Vasulevu</i>	lit. big <i>vasu</i> . The son of a foreign chief, as he is <i>vasu</i> to his mother group, usually of chiefly rank.
<i>Vasua</i>	clam shell ( <i>Tridacna derosa</i> )

<i>Vau</i>	inner bark of the <i>Hibiscus</i> , notably used to confectioned traditional <i>liku</i> skirts and modern <i>salusalu</i> garlands
<i>Veibulu</i>	lit. toward ( <i>vei</i> ) the afterworld ( <i>bulu</i> ), the funerals
<i>Velaudromu</i>	rare type of club that has a series of shallow furrows running up the head and designed to smash rather than cleave into [the] head (Clunie, personal communication)
<i>Vesi</i>	<i>Intsia bijuga</i> , native wood, regarded as sacred in several places of Fiji. It serves to make canoes, dishes, etc. and is especially abundant in Lau (notably Kabara).
<i>Vividrasa</i>	According to Clunie, for clubs, wrapped in brown <i>magimagi</i> ; from <i>vivi</i> , to roll or roll up; and <i>drasa</i> , reddish brown colour from the soil
<i>Voivoi</i>	pandanus, cultivated shrub whose leaves are used in basketry crafts (mats, baskets, etc.). Lauan syn. <i>Kie</i> or <i>kiekie</i> .
<i>Volivoli</i>	tributes
<i>Vonovono</i>	adj. inlaid or overlaid
<i>Vonu</i>	Sea turtle. Three great species of turtles are found in Fiji today: the green turtle and Fijian turtle par excellence ( <i>vonudina</i> ), the leatherback turtle ( <i>taba-i-valu</i> , <i>tutuvalu</i> or <i>vonudakulaca</i> ) and the hawksbill turtle ( <i>vonutaku</i> )
<i>Vorovoro</i>	chiefly necklace, made of <i>Ovula costella</i> , or small white cowries, cut lengthwise and threaded onto precious vegetal cords (Clunie 2003a: fig.105)
<i>Vuaka</i>	pig, boar
<i>Batinivuaka</i>	boar tusk or tooth
<i>Vulo</i>	coconut phloem, coarse natural tissue, usually found between the stipules of coconut palms. It was traditionally used in Fiji as a drainer for medicines, etc. and as a material for various artefacts, including face masks ( <i>matavulo</i> )  Also, a ceremonial unite of ten whale's teeth ( <i>tabua</i> )
<i>Vunikau</i>	type of two handed clubs, carved from the root part of a hardwood shrub
<i>Vunivalu</i>	title, notably in Bau, attributed to the war chief, by opposition to the ruling chief, although the case of Bau proves that the tendency could reverse
<b>W</b>	
<i>Wa</i>	string, cord, fibre
<i>Watabu</i>	lit. the <i>tabu</i> cord, the cord of plaited <i>magimagi</i> attached to the front log of the <i>tanoa</i> and directed toward the guest of honour, or higher individual in rank, in the <i>yaqona</i> circle.
<i>Walooa</i>	lit. the black fibre, a black creeper plant ( <i>Rhizomorpha</i> ), whose fibres were formerly used to make skirts ( <i>liku</i> )
<i>Wai</i>	water  also, a unit of ten <i>katonimasima</i>
<i>Wailoalooa</i>	laundry blue pigment
<i>Waqqa</i>	the canoe, the boat; by extension any vehicle
<i>Wasekaseka</i> or <i>Waseisei</i>	Necklaces made of pointed pieces of whale ivory, of chiefly significance. Also in use elsewhere in Western Polynesian, notably in Samoa.
<i>iWau</i>	generic, wooden-club (weapon) (Capell 1941)

## Y

<i>Yalewa</i>	girl, female
<i>Yaqona</i>	<i>Piper Methysticum</i> , pepper plant and the drink made the infusion of its root; syn. <i>Kava</i> in Polynesia. See Gatty (2009, p.320-22) for detail.
<i>Yasi</i>	sandalwood
<i>iYau</i>	valuable, as defined by Hooper (1982), by contrast with <i>iyaya</i>
<i>iYaya</i>	common thing, by opposition with <i>iyau</i> , especially personal equipment and functional tools (cf. Toganivalu 1917)

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## Conference papers

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2013 (8 June)

Kava bowls of Western Polynesia, a Fijian story? Cambridge : Fijian Art Research Project's Workshop, Researching Fijian Collections: Revealing & Developing Relationships, Past and Present.

Buadromo, Sagale

2013 (7 June)

How relevant is the Fiji Museum to the community? Cambridge : Fijian Art Research Project's Workshop, Researching Fijian Collections: Revealing & Developing Relationships, Past and Present.

Hasell, Jill

2002 (December)

The Fijian collections of the British Museum. Dresden: PAA symposium.

Leclerc-Caffarel, Stéphanie

2011 (7 April)

Masi des collections fidjiennes anciennes: marqueurs chronologiques. Paris : Musée du Quai Branly, Workshop on barkcloths.

2010 (11 August)

Circulation and exchange instead of repatriation. Rarotonga, Cook Islands: PAA 10th International Symposium.

## Websites

Fiji Museum's Facebook@: <https://www.facebook.com/fijimuseum?sk=wall>

Fateful Voyage, website dedicated to the Mutiny on the Bounty and gathering the original documents related to it: <http://www.fatefulvoyage.com/index.html>

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Fiji's treasured culture, highlighting the collections of Museum Victoria & the Fiji Museum: <http://museumvictoria.com.au/fiji/index.aspx>

Legifrance, the Website of the French Law: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>

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